

Preface

“The Larsen Legacy: Volume 4” is a compilation of family letters written to disseminate family news, express love, bear witness of gospel truths, and keep our family close despite the miles that separated us. 1994-1995 saw a continuation of educational endeavors including graduate programs for Lindsay in Indiana, Randy in Iowa, Stephen in Provo, and David in Arizona and the ongoing support of Stephani, Shauntel, Bonnie, and Andrea whose efforts on the home front ensured spousal success even while babies were born, church callings were magnified, and home fires kept burning.

This volume includes words of encouragement and praise for our missionaries, Becky in Oklahoma and John in Taiwan, as well as letters detailing the escapades and achievements of Mike, Paul, Tim, and SaraKay. These years were a time of rejoicing for missions served, grandbabies born, educational goals achieved, Church service rendered, athletic skills developed, and family bonds strengthened.

This book is a treatise on parental efforts to give continuing support for you children in your varied challenges. Our trips back and forth across state lines give tangible evidence of our ongoing commitment to your well-being.

Dedication

To my husband, Steve, for his insightful letters that inspired and instructed his scattered posterity; for his untiring efforts to write despite the other heavy demands on his time.

To children who pressed forward in their righteous endeavors despite the sacrifices those endeavors required; who kept alive the family legacy of goodness and excellence.

Acknowledgements

To John for his formatting expertise and for Steve’s ongoing mentoring on computer issues.

To extended family members, young and old, who encourage this project and who take time to read and connect with our continuing family saga.

The Larsen Legacy

Volume 4: 1994-1995

Let Us All Press On

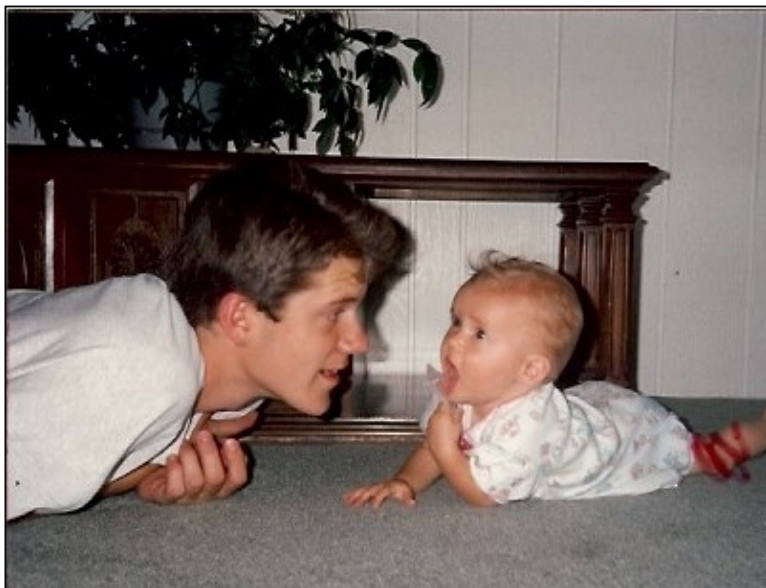
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January 1, 1994

[Mom] Happy New Year! Hope all of you have enjoyed your holiday break and are eager to get back into things....well, maybe not eager...how about begrudgingly willing? Anyway, for us the "things" will include a 9:00 a.m. meeting schedule and adjusting to an earlier Church time. Daddy will be released tomorrow as Blazer leader and sustained as a Valiant teacher. It is a temporary assignment because the bishopric wants him to get back into his high priest quorum after a five year absence. They are still so short-handed in Primary that they have recruited him until another teacher can be found. He feels good about this change. He was having a difficult time doing the mid-week activities with the Blazer boys with his work schedule.

We had an enjoyable holiday visiting with Dave and Andrea and sweet Laurel Ann. She was the center of attention. The hardest thing was keeping SaraKay from mauling her. David didn't get much of a break since he worked on his graduate school admission forms. After reading through the required lists and essays, I have a lot more sympathy for Lindsay and Randy and what they've gone through this past year. Although David didn't finish, he'll



soon have them completed.

Sunday morning we showed off Laurel Ann in our ward and then left to go to Idaho Falls to Joel's welcome home. It's always a joy to be with Bonnie's family. Steve and Bonnie joined us Sunday evening for dinner and games.

The biggest surprise under the tree for me this Christmas was a note announcing Bonnie's pregnancy. We're delighted! We had some wonderful visits with both Becky and John on Christmas Eve. John called at five and the connection was so good it sounded like he was in the next room. We had just received his letter that day so it was easy to visit with him about his experiences. Jessica was here and took her turn with the rest of us.

That evening we went to Grandpa and Grandma Larsen's for their Christmas party. Their home was beautifully decorated for Christmas. We thoroughly enjoyed ourselves and returned home about 10:00. Becky called while we were gone and gave us the

number at which to call her but we were unable to get through until about 10:30.

I kept thinking of a comment that President Clement made about Becky and John. He said he was glad to send out two missionaries that he knew would stay out and do the work they were supposed to do. It was sweet of him to say that. They are both trying to be positive and productive.

Last night our stake hosted a dance for the youth. Mike and Paul asked if they could have a group here after the dance and we agreed if they would keep things under control. They left for the dance about 9 and a short while later Paul walked in the back door with some friends. They said the dance bands were not playing any songs that were good for dancing and they wondered if some kids could come



to our house and have their own dance. I wasn't sure they could dance on carpet but Paul said they would use the garage. We figured they wouldn't last long out in that cold garage so we consented. For the next hour we had a dance going on in our garage. Dad and I stood in the office in the dark and watched the cars lined up on the road in front of our house and the stream of kids coming and going. We figured there had to be over 60 friends in the garage and we felt a little concerned about the whole situation. Eventually, Mike, who serves on the Youth Council, came home and joined the dance,



too. I tried to call the stake center and talk to one of the youth leaders but couldn't reach them. Daddy donned his winter coat and made the rounds outside, checking to see that everyone was minding their business. Before the New Year arrived, word arrived that the stake wanted the kids and their CD's to come back and they would dismiss the bands. There was a mass exodus of kids, CD'S, and cars heading back to the stake center to finish off the evening. We were relieved to see them go and grateful that the stake leaders were the ones overseeing things.

This morning I asked Mike, "Who were all those kids?" His response was a little unnerving. "I don't know. Some of them I had never seen before in my life!" If we get ripped off in these next few days we'll know who those "unknowns" were.

Dad has been working all day making a capote. It is a coat made out of a heavy blanket like the ones the trappers used in the winter in the mountains. He has done all the sewing by hand. One of the kids accused him of looking like a dark venison, I mean version, (too much time spent thinking about trappers) of the KuKluxKlan (but that was before he added the fringe.)

[Dad] Truly this holiday season, with the opportunities to touch base with each of you has been delightful. Yesterday was inventory day and everyone helped take inventory in the scout stores. It was interesting to see the variety of items carried in the store and the number that become obsolete if care isn't given to the management of that inventory. That afternoon I helped John Whetton unload 30 burlap bags with tarps in them that he had picked up from military acquisition. Each bag weighed 192 pounds and it was quite a job muscling them around into the storage area.

January is already filling up and is going to be a busy time for me, so I'm relieved about being released as Blazer leader. That night we listened to the Holiday Bowl and were delighted that BYU played as well as they did.

Just a quick thought from a talk by Elder Boyd K. Packer in an All-Church Coordinating Council Meeting as he talked about his appointment as head of Seminaries and Institutes of Religion 38 years ago. Elder Harold B. Lee gave him this counsel: "You must decide now which way you face. Either you represent the teachers and students and champion their causes or you represent the Brethren who appointed you. Some of your predecessors faced the wrong way." The particular concerns Elder Packer addressed were gays, feminist movement, and scholars.



January 11, 1994

My mind has been on redecorating all week; I've tried to determine what to do with my carpet. At first I was going to replace the kitchen Formica but the more I looked at the carpet the more I felt that if there was money to do just one thing, it ought to be new carpet. Daddy and I have been shopping but I'm not sure that I've seen the one that meets my criteria. Decorating is not one of my strong points and I know that it will be another 15

years before we get to make another change. I've spent time visiting some homes and am amazed at what good shape our home is in after so many years of heavy use.

Yesterday was my first Merrie Miss activity day with the combined class of 11 girls. We planned the whole year's activities and I came home a bit overwhelmed. We also started choir practice Sunday; we have five new members. I'm finding that many of our members are novices and so even though we have the numbers, our sound is still not very good. But, in terms of participation and growth of the individual members, it is exciting.

Daddy was changed back to his Blazers last week because the new Blazer leader decided that she couldn't do the midweek activities with all the other demands in her life. I have already heard from two parents of his Valiant Class that the kids are disappointed that he is not going to teach them anymore. He is a hit in the Primary!

The kids are back in school and everyone seems to be doing fine. Tryouts are this week for the school musical and Mike and Paul are auditioning. Mike was selected to represent the school at a "mouse-trap" competition. He is to build a car that is powered by the spring in a mouse trap. He will go to Boise and compete to see whose car will go the farthest. The winners are awarded prizes from the sponsor, Hewlett Packard of Boise.

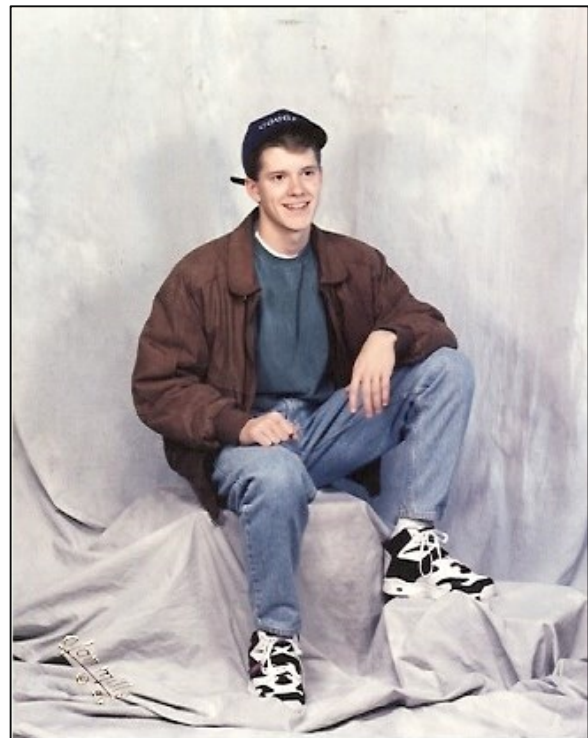
We spent our Saturday going to three ballgames: Mikes' team with Daddy as coach, Paul's team, and Tim's Jazz team. Last week we won two out of three. Daddy's team is getting better but still has a struggle. I've been proud of Daddy for his patience and persistence in helping them develop their skills. This is the first year that Tim has been on a team that is winning and that's exciting!

SaraKay is worn out by the time we've sat through three games every Saturday but it's a fun way to spend the day. Daddy will be going



to Jackson Hole tomorrow for two days. He has been very busy with his work and usually doesn't get home until 6:30 every evening.

Mike has been busy with school, Chambers, and work, and is saving money for his college housing. Next year at this time he will be sending in housing money for the upcoming



fall semester and will be attending with Becky, John, Steve, and Bonnie. I would like to see him go for a semester before he goes on his mission but a lot will be determined by the scholarship situation.

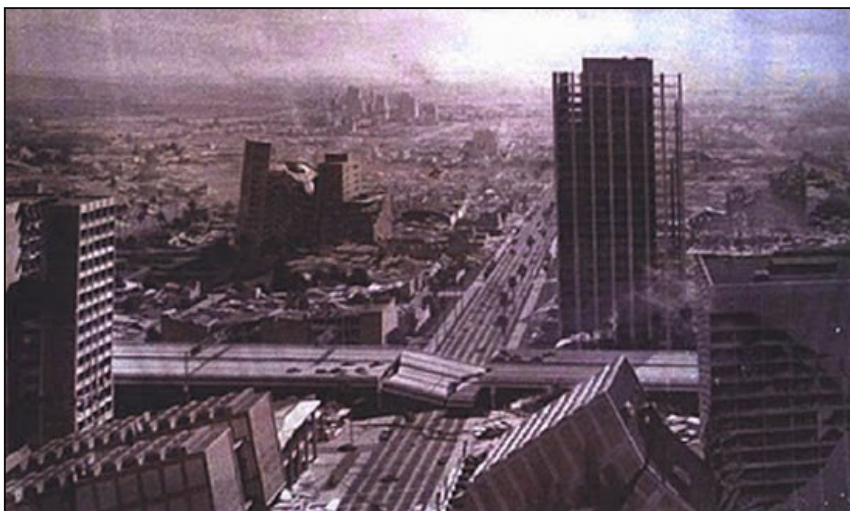
SaraKay is now a Sunbeam in Primary and it has been fun to see her sitting with her class in the Primary room. She is getting more manageable and able to express herself. She was looking at something the other day and said, "Look, Mom, isn't that weird!" She also has been using the slang, Dang, that the kids use although I don't like the way it sounds. Last night she said that she had been in my bedroom in the dark and saw two creepy eyes under the bed. Her vocabulary amazes me!

Daddy awoke this morning about 6:30 and was groping in the dark. I figured the terrible wind that was blowing when we went to bed must have knocked out the power. Pretty soon he crawled back in bed and commented that there wasn't a light on anywhere. It wasn't too long before we heard SaraKay making her way down the hall to our



bedroom. She climbed into bed with us and we told her that the power was out and the lights didn't work. She wanted her dad to get up and fix them! The only radio in the house that worked without electricity was a Walkman of Mike's so we got him up to find out what was happening. The news about the Los Angeles earthquake was on every station. I immediately called Provo to see if they were all right and Steve answered and said that they hadn't even known about the earthquake until Bonnie's mother called them. Parts of ten states were suffering from power outages but somehow Salt Lake and Provo were okay. We listened for a long time to the school closures and found out that Snake River was also dismissed for the day. Power was

restored about 8:30 and I have frantically been getting my wash and work done in case of other outages that might occur. We called Uncle Staff in Escondido and he said their home shook for a full minute before that initial shock quit. They are alright. I couldn't help thinking about Steph and Linds and am grateful that they were a long way from the epicenter. I've been



worrying about Jeff and Jonie and the -45 degree weather in Minnesota. Hopefully they are keeping warm.

Some of you are aware that Larry Martin was diagnosed with brain cancer a couple of weeks ago. Some of the residents in that area have raised the question about a possible link between all the local cancer deaths the last few years. There have been 40 deaths within a few mile radius from Larry's home in the last 10 years and a fellow that works with hazardous waste is suggesting that an old landfill on Larry's property may have received hazardous waste materials and they may be seeping into the soil and water. It has been on the news several times. Grandma Larsen is one of those deaths as her home is less than a mile from the dump site.

I am still in the process of choosing carpet. This is such a big investment and one that we will live with for so long. I would like to get this decision made soon so that we can get the painting done before spring arrives and the yard needs work. With the weather so mild, spring seems just around the corner.

Life has been much more settled for us the last few weeks with the holidays over, kids in school, missionaries gone, moves made, and Grandpa and Grandma Larsen gone. We have enjoyed some quiet time but the



highlight of our week is when we get letters and phone calls. I was determined to get some input on this letter from the kids today but by the time we hosted another Merrie Miss activity, attended a piano recital, and played neighborhood basketball, everyone was tired and went to bed.

Saturday was a red letter day. All three ball teams won! Mike's (Coach Larsen's) team played better than they have ever played and Paul's team won in a real squeaker. Tim came home with a black eye from his game but they beat the No. 1 threat in the league. It was exciting! Tonight Paul and Tim performed at a piano recital at the Civic Center and did well. They are pretty faithful with their practicing despite the allure of other activities. I'm proud of them.

[Dad] *"You are the bows from which your children, as living arrows, are sent forth."* As I contemplate that thought, I am amazed at how far you arrows have gone and are still going. I am so proud of you and what you are doing with your lives. Another corollary thought is how arrows turn



into bows sending forth new arrows. A friend of mine, Harvey Tanner, once said, *"You never know how good a parent you are until you see your grandchildren."* It's only then that you see how much of your teaching and example has been internalized well enough to be transferred to the next generation. Based on that premise, our parents have done an excellent job of parenting!

Another thought that I've had about the arrow analogy is that there has to be a telephone line connecting the bow and the arrows. It was so good to hear from Dad last Saturday as he was home for the weekend so Alva Lu could spend time with Trina and her new baby. It is also wonderful to hear from Mom and Dad Richards weekly. The regular contact with family is a touchstone—a guide, example, basis for living.



Jackson, WY for a couple of days. There were people who gave freely of their time to help me meet influential people with means and the potential of helping scouting. It was really interesting to observe the lifestyles of many residents and tourists and be grateful for the situation we have at home. It would be tough to raise a family there with all the worldly influences and obvious wealth without becoming tainted by it. A closing thought, *"A train of thought is only as good*

as its engineer," and *"A man who has no imagination has no wings."*

January 25, 1994

[Mom] I've spent the last few hours taking down wall hangings and stashing them downstairs in the guest room until the painting and carpet laying are completed. SaraKay has been following me around saying, "But that is your special Christmas doll; you can't put her downstairs, Mama!" She is having a hard time grasping just what is going on. She is not the only one. I never dreamed that I would have such a difficult time replacing our carpet. I feel like I did when Daddy took our old dryer and replaced it with the new one. A part of me left with the old dryer. Now we are making other changes and I am fearful that the new decor won't seem as homey as what we used to have. This has been traumatic! We have never in our married life been in the situation that we are in right now. We have always moved before a home



Last week I had the opportunity to work in

was this old and with the move came changes, but we've never actually redecorated. My Grandma Richards once told me that she had a hard time with change. I guess I inherited this from her.

Daddy joined the Snake River Orchestra last week. Linnea Hammond was very pleased. It is a fairly new

organization and a very ambitious undertaking for our little farming community. Daddy bought a trumpet at a pawn shop for \$50 and found a used case at a garage sale. He made a nice leather handle for it and has been practicing each day for about a half an hour. He usually practices in my office in the evenings. Last night when I went down to kiss Tim goodnight, we could hear Daddy playing upstairs. Tim said, "He's really good, isn't he!" I had to agree. He can really make that \$50 trumpet sing!

Paul and Mike are on call-backs for play tryouts. Mike goes to Boise this weekend to compete in the Mousetrap contest. His friends are coming over after school to help him. Paul is considering working as a counselor at Camp Little Lemhi this summer. The

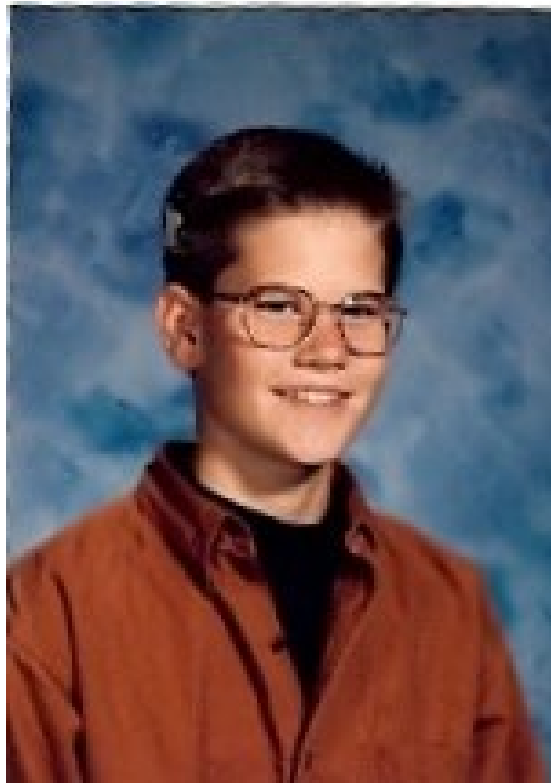


director asked Daddy if he had any sons interested in that kind of work. It is for six weeks and I'm not sure how I feel about it. He would be gone Monday through Friday or Saturday for those six weeks. One advantage is that Tim could have the mowing business and make more than he has been able to make in years past. Paul

and Merritt have also considered starting a mowing business together. We've got to get these details worked out and decide what will work best. Mike will continue at Kesler's.

Tim scored 10 points in his basketball game. His team won by 20 points. His team is the

only undefeated team in the league. He is elated! Daddy hopes to get some painting done tonight; I want to be available to help. This weekend is the Klondike Derby so there won't be time over the weekend. We are enjoying teaching the same age group. Daddy is even helping me with some of his handouts on the computer. This 11 year old age is a wonderful age. I hope all of you got to see the satellite broadcast on children last Sunday evening. It was beautiful!





Note from Paul, the Boy of Destiny and Hope of Mankind: Last Saturday was a tough game. I didn't get to start; we were down by nine points at the start of the game. Then my coach put me in. Shortly thereafter we were neck and neck, each team giving it their all to win this game of games. It continued to be a bloody battle. At the opening of the fourth quarter, my team lost it. They threw the ball away time and time again. It seemed as though I was the only person on my team who actually knew how to play basketball. Apparently everyone but me was flustered beyond belief. Then I said to myself, "Paul Archibald Larsen, if there is anyone in the world that can turn this game around, it is you. You are the only hope. Now go and do your ward proud. The weight rests on your shoulders." I

rose to the challenge, but my team was still down in the dumps. The rope that I had thrown down to them to bring them up to my level had snapped in half. We had luckily maintained our defense so that we were able to keep up with the opposite team, despite our lack of offense. Finally, at the close of the game we found ourselves down one point with ten seconds left. Every single person on my team except me had thrown the ball away at least five times. My team member took the ball out and threw it to me. I knew I didn't have much time. Racing down the court, I quickly explored my options. Every voice in my body was yelling, "Shoot it, Paul! Shoot it!" With about five seconds left, I drove into the key and was about to go up for the shot. I then saw Kory Godfrey close to the basket, unguarded. I, on the other hand, had two men on me. Faking the shot, I passed to Kory who put it up for the score. We led by one point and the battle was won. We jumped for joy as the other team fell to the ground in tears, crushed at their defeat.

February 28, 1994

[Mom] I'm in the computer room trying to occupy SaraKay and get these letters ready to go out today. Daddy left at six this morning for a trip to Island Park with the other staff members. Brent Stolworthy, a generous



supporter of scouting, offered to host the staff and their wives on a retreat for three days. The men went today and the wives are joining them tomorrow. We will drive to Island Park, meet our husbands, snowmobile into Old Faithful and back to Island Park, spend the night at the Stolworthy cabin, have breakfast, and head home, arriving about noon Wednesday. I have been getting the



arrangements figured out, including babysitting and meals. Dad and I decided this would be our anniversary celebration! Daddy just got back late Friday night from spending three days on a Las Vegas trip. He took the council van and five women who will be in charge of the popcorn campaign next year. All the women told me that they had a ball but Daddy said it wore him out!

[Dad] Thursday night Mike had his first tournament game and I wasn't around to coach. I lined up a substitute and felt I should go with Mike. I was glad I did because Mike got injured and eventually I ended up taking him into the hospital for x-rays. Although his arm wasn't broken, the doctor said it was "jammed" and would be painful for a long time. Mike is wearing a sling part of the time and his arm is swollen and painful to move.

Saturday morning was Tim's game with the team he dislikes the most. As we suspected, it was a heated one. Tim's team played well and won and then played again Saturday night for the championship and won again. He has a nice trophy and we are all relieved that the season is over and we can free up our Saturday's. (Now for three weeks of scout pow-wows). Mike's team will finish up their tournament this week and Paul's team's tournament has yet to start. We got our carpet

laid and it looks so nice. What a relief to get that done!

[Mom] Saturday, Delis Orr called to ask what we were performing in church Sunday and I realized that I had forgotten that our family was supposed to get a special musical number for sacrament meeting. We quickly found a special arrangement of "More Holiness Give Me" in Hymnal Plus and worked that up between ball games and the Blazer first aid meet. It was fun to sing with Daddy, Mike, and Paul and we had a lot of nice compliments. Sunday night we had 47 to choir practice. We had to set up folding chairs to accommodate everyone. It is so fun to have that many voices! It's a challenge to select good music and to perform twice a month but I'm excited for what is happening with our choir.

[Dad] For our anniversary this year, we had a unique opportunity. I had a staff planning conference in Island Park where we stayed in some cabins. On Tuesday we rented snowmobiles and our wives joined us as we drove to Old Faithful and back. Sue was very timid at first (we were each on our own machine), but she soon got into it and really enjoyed the excursion. We were able to see moose, buffalo, swans, and lots of people while we were all decked out in our suits and

helmets. Sue said she felt like a Hell's Angel. We came back over Two Top and got into some dense fog and got lost for a while but saw some of the most beautiful scenery of the whole trip during that unscheduled detour. We traveled about 135 miles that day, a lot of it over washboard trails. We were tired and sore; it took several days to recover.

David went to Phoenix to interview at the University of Arizona for the Health Administration Masters program. He met Miken at the institute and she showed him around. He thought it was sweet of her to take the time. Paul has applied to work at Camp Little Lemhi this year. On an impulse, we called Jeanie and then sent an application to Christian. There is a remote possibility that they may be able to work together in the commissary.

We had the opportunity a few weeks ago to take five women to Las Vegas for a Trail's End Popcorn convention. We drove down one day, attended the seminar the next, and then drove back. Weaver Popcorn picked up most of the tab and it was an excellent seminar. The part of Las Vegas we saw was clean and remarkably family oriented. I don't have any desire to work the one-armed bandits or participate in any of the other gambling. We went to a show put on by the "Legends" which is a group that does imitations of major stars. They look and sound just like them. It is an incredible experience to be close enough to touch Michael Jackson, Roy Orbison, Dolly Parton, Neil Diamond, and Elvis Presley. The battle of the English frigate and the pirate ship at Treasure Island is another great experience!

March 6, 1994

[Dad] I had a sweet visit with Jonie when she called Friday to wish us happy anniversary. For our anniversary we went snowmobiling from Island Park into Old Faithful in the Park and back. It was washboardy and hard on our backs. Mom was really slow and timid at first,

but she built up her confidence until she could ride with the fastest of our group~a real speed demon! It was a unique experience! We enjoyed the cabin we stayed in and the association with the other scouting professionals.

On the way up on Monday morning we were almost involved in an accident. As we left Ashton, climbing the hills into Island Park, I was driving the council van with six of us in it. It was just below freezing and foggy and overcast. The roads looked alright, but they were icy. A 15 year old driving a Jeep Cherokee was going too fast and was passing a car coming down a hill toward us and lost control. He slid against the plowed snow just in front of us and rolled over into the middle of the road. When I saw what was happening I began pumping the brakes and looking for dry shoulder to get a better grip. We stopped just short of the overturned Jeep and watched as he climbed out of the driver's side door. We pulled around out of the way and directed traffic while we waited for an officer to come. A snow plow came down the hill and couldn't stop either, so he put down his plow and turned to the side of the road where his plow braked him to a stop just before he reached us. Luckily, no one was hurt.

I wanted to share with you a sweet letter that was forwarded to me from the Church Membership Department:

Dear Elder,

You asked my husband and I to call you Elder the first time we met in 1963. I wonder if you still remember converting us--Ann & Bob Harrison. We then lived at Easemore Rd., Redditch, Worcester, England. If you don't remember us we certainly remember you, and thank you from the bottom of our hearts for introducing us to this wonderful Gospel which we have come to treasure more each passing year. I've felt for a long time that I would like to get in touch with you and just let you know how happy we are in the Gospel. In the last 2 years we have been on a mission, for the first



18 months we were in the temple names processing centre, but in September last year we were called to serve in the Presidency of the Sydney temple: Bob as second counselor, myself as Assistant Matron and this acted as a catalyst to get me trying to contact you and to let you know that without your dedication all those years ago, we would never have had this blessing in our lives. As you can see we are in Sydney having emigrated in 1967. We have never regretted joining the Church or of coming to Australia. We feel our children have been given more chances out here than they would ever have had in England. And God has been very good to us since we have been here. Well, I won't write anymore right now. Please write to us we'd love to hear from you. Our sincere love and appreciation. Ann & Bob Harrison

What a treat to get a letter like that after 30 years and realize anew the benefits and blessings of serving a mission. What a joyous reunion to look forward to! John & Becky, you are so blessed to be able to serve the Lord; you don't have any idea how far reaching your influence will be. We each send ripples down through eternity with the lives we touch.

[Mom] Paul has taken a moment out of his busy and inspiring life to grace us with his presence and enlighten and uplift us with this tale of struggle, tribulation, and triumph:

Thanks, Mom. After the famed victory in the Scripture Bowl of the "Larsen Five" ten years ago, the Larsen legend had died down a bit. Well, the Larsen's reign supreme once again. This year there was no Scripture Bowl or Scripture Bee. This year, they created a new scripture game: Scripture Jeopardy. The game is played just as the popular game show is played. The five categories were: Key Words, Historical Setting, Doctrinal Teaching, Missionary Application, and Personal Application.

A couple weeks before the Scripture Jeopardy competition was to take place, I decided to form a team and Mike also decided to. He chose Andy Davis, Matt Pretl, and Sabrina Dance for his team, which was named "The Mob." I chose Merritt VanOrden, Bret Turpin, and Justin Bradshaw to be on my team and accompany me on this glorious trek for victory. We had high hopes and aspirations and unitedly decided to call ourselves "The Mormon Mafia." The name



was very intimidating and undoubtedly struck terror in the hearts of our competitors. We studied hard and when the time of the competition arrived, we were ready. Wearing trench coats and fedoras, we marched bravely into the seminary building, expecting nothing less than a glorious victory. Mike's team wore hockey masks and wielded baseball bats. As we looked over the high caliber of religious people that were to be our competition, our sure victory no longer felt so sure.

We were up against Cleggs, Whytes, Matthews, Andersons, Turpins, Lees, Hammonds, and many other members of prominent families known for their religiosity.

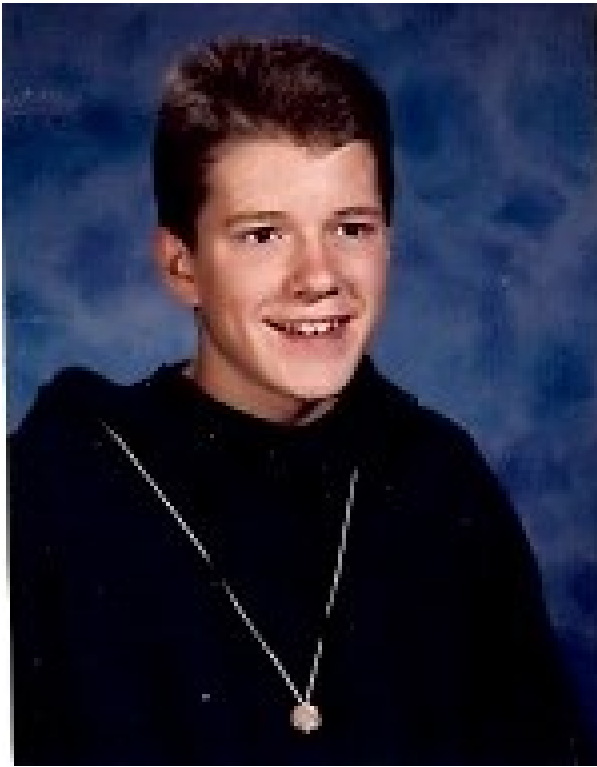
In the first round, we had a bye and didn't get to play, so we watched Mike's team win a game. In the second round, we came up against the Kirtland Crypts, and defeated them by about 5,500 points. We were feeling fine. Mike's team defeated the Mighty



Mormon Women in the second round. We won our next game against Mike's team by about 2,000. We were feeling great. Then we found out we had another bye and were already in the championship. We wanted to play again so they organized a game for us. We were going up against Micah Clegg, Doug Whyte, Blake Barnard, and Spencer Pierson. Then we, The Mormon Mafia, decided to call in another team. They brought in Carrie Matthews, Rebecca Anderson, Brother Baird's daughter, and Brooke Taylor. Then we decided to let them use their scripture mastery cards that had all the answers on them. They mocked and scorned us as we calmly sat in our seats, patiently awaiting the upcoming round. The outlook did not look too bright. We were going up against two good teams, and they had their scripture cards. They were sure they had us beat. Apparently they knew not the powers we possessed, but I'm sure they knew more about our powers than they would have liked when we defeated them by 5,000 points.

Anyway, we ended up taking first place, and Mike's team took second, which was quite amazing considering that they were missing a player, which is a major handicap. Both teams were filled with pride as Brother Baird reminded everyone of the Scripture Bowl ten years ago when the All-Larsen team took first





place. The legend has returned, and Mike and I are geared up for yet another Larsen victory next year.

[Mom] As Daddy mentioned, this year for our anniversary we went with other scouting professionals and snowmobiled into Yellowstone Park. Dad and his bunch drove to Island Park early Monday and had a full day of meetings. I arranged for SaraKay to stay with Cammacks on Tuesday and I met some of the other wives at 5:30 a.m. Tuesday and drove together to the cabin, arriving by 8:00. The men picked up our snowmobiles and outfits the night before at the rental place so within 20 minutes of our arrival at the cabin, we were in our outfits, including helmets, ski masks, and boots and on our machines. Daddy gave me some brief instructions about driving my machine and we all took off. Each helmet has a visor that snaps up and down with a slight touch and I quickly put down my visor to keep my face warm and protected. I had such a difficult time seeing with the visor in place that I quickly flipped it up and continued on with just the ski mask for protection. When we stopped for a few minutes, I commented to Daddy that my visor

was difficult to see out of and he checked it and realized that it had fogged up and told me to just wipe it off with my glove occasionally. That solved the problem and I was able to continue. It didn't take me very long to realize that this snowmobiling bunch was not as inexperienced as I was and we had to cover a lot of territory to get the machines returned by five that night. It was very frightening for me to be handling my own machine and be expected to keep pace with everyone else so that I didn't slow down the group. Daddy stayed behind me most of the trip and made sure that I was alright. It came as a surprise to me that snowmobiling is so rough on a person's body. The trails were very bumpy because of the thousands of snowmobilers. We traveled nearly 70 miles in Yellowstone and every inch was a washboard! Even the most seasoned ones of the group admitted that they were the worst riding conditions that they had ever seen. We really took a beating in Yellowstone Park but despite that, it was very exciting so know that I had toured Yellowstone by snowmobile.

On the way from West Yellowstone to the cabin, our group decided to take a trail that would show us some scenery on one of the mountain trails. The lead man made a wrong turn, we followed, and soon we were all a long way from where we were supposed to be. We hit a thick patch of fog on top of the mountain and we had to be very careful to keep together and on the trail. It was easy to see how someone could get disoriented, lost, and freeze to death before anyone found them. I could also see how easy it would be to run into another snowmobile or tree and be injured. Luckily, our group stayed on the groomed trails and didn't do any fancy tricks or playing around. When our leader realized we had taken a wrong turn, he corrected our direction but it added another 10-15 miles to our day. By that time, we were all exhausted. What a relief to make it home safely and with no injuries! That night we were all so tired that nothing looked better than a warm bed!

It was a very different experience for me to be a part of a group like that. We would pass touring vehicles and the people in them would look at us like we were experienced outdoorsman riding these awesome snow machines and wearing a big outfit with a helmet and snazzy jacket.

When we returned to the cabin that evening, part of the conversation centered on accidents that the group knew about during snowmobiling excursions. As I listened I realized that every fear I had imagined that day was valid. I was glad I hadn't heard those stories before I went that day. I was so sore after we got home that it took several days to feel human again. But I'm glad I did it and it will be an anniversary that I won't soon forget!

Jonie called and said she was interviewing for a good job in her accounting field. Good luck to her. Steve is still awaiting word on his contest application and will be notified at a banquet the first week of April as to how he did. Lindsay will be flying to San Jose for a week during spring break. Randy is now working two jobs, first as waiter and second



as a tutor. He also is now the Blazer leader in the Primary. His good friend is the leader in the other ward so they are going to hold their mid-week activities jointly. Andrea and Dave's graduation date is April 21st! They are arranging to both walk with David's college so that family won't have to attend two convocations.

March 13, 1994

[Mom] This past week was a very enjoyable one. We were asked to put together a musical program for our Relief Society dinner Saturday evening. We got a double mixed quartet together and prepared a medley of songs from "The Music Man". Daddy, Kent Fife, Randy Ruger, and Monte Bowman performed "The Animals are Comin'" as a second number and





my aerobics group was asked to perform a Charleston dance. That assignment proved to be very challenging for me especially since I had missed part of the practices being gone for a week from aerobics. We rented outfits from a costume shop including long beads, fringe dresses, and feather/sequined headbands.

I guess it is important that once in a while we step outside of our comfort zone and participating in that dance was about as far out of my "zone" as I want to get! We did have a fun evening, though, and compliments on both numbers.

Sunday morning in sacrament meeting Bishop Moon announced that the following Sunday our ward would be getting a new bishopric. It came as a surprise to some but Pres. Bowman had alerted me as our choir has been asked to perform that day and they

wanted a particularly fitting song. It is difficult in a situation like this to not speculate but as I think about the possible candidates I am amazed again at the strength we have in this ward and the great number of worthy and capable men who could fill that position. Dad and I visited privately about our feelings regarding whether he would be involved but we both agreed that we didn't feel that he would. Daddy is ready for a change of assignment; he's been so removed from his peers for five years while working in the Primary. He is very good with the boys and it is a tough spot to fill but he misses the association with other ward members.

The community orchestra is providing the music for Shenandoah. It is going to be fun for Daddy to be so much a part of that production with Mike and Paul. They both left early this morning for their yearly Chambers choir tour to Salt Lake. They will return Wednesday night just in time for a complete run through of Act 1. I have got to get costumes together for them.

Mike was invited to attend MORP with Cami Hansen. She asked him by sending him a balloon every class period of the day on Thursday and each balloon was stuffed full of tiny bits of paper folded up. It wasn't until he arrived home that he got the final installment balloon with the answer of "who" was asking him to the dance. He is excited to go with her and pleased that he also discovered two other girls who had intended to ask him. He is enjoying his contacts and has scheduled to take his ACT come April. It doesn't seem possible that he and Becky and John will all be together in fall of '95 at BYU.

Tim is finished with basketball and has started pacing. He purchased a sling shot the other day and that has given him something to do. He gets so restless when he isn't really active physically. Paul was sustained as the teacher's quorum president and is nearly as



[Dad] Some of this is going to be a rehash of what your mother told you. It was a real thrill to be able to sing with the groups we did last Saturday. I'm like you, John-I love harmony! I know we didn't do justice to "De Animals" compared to John's quartet but we had a lot of fun with it. (It looks like we will

tall as Mike and eats continuously. The other night after a ball game, Daddy and I were sitting in the dining area and Paul and Tim came in and started going through the fridge and cupboards, eating leftovers, popping corn, scrounging everywhere, making sandwiches, and in general eating everything in sight. When they finally finished, Daddy looked at me and just shook his head in disbelief.

get another chance to perform at the Stake High Priest Social in a couple of weeks.) I wish I had a movie camera going while your mother was on stage with the Charleston. She and the other ladies were really good "flappers." I have been enjoying my trumpet and the orchestra, but it is hard because I can't play near as well as I used to, and I have too many conflicts on Wednesday nights.

The weather here is beautiful and it appears that winter is past. It's too early to start preparing the garden. SaraKay has enjoyed being able to go outside although she's had a terrible cold and I've tried to keep her in. Tomorrow her little friend McKay is coming for the day and I am going to earn a little bit towards my wallpaper. I am going to trade Becky Reader wallpaper for babysitting. We are enjoying our carpet and the freshly painted walls. It has been nice to have at least part of the house deep cleaned. Well, I better go. I am meeting later with Carolyn Crawford to plan our annual spring Fine Arts Concert. Hopefully the new auditorium will be completed in April and ready for an open house, Shenandoah, and our spring concert featuring the new grand piano that the Fine Arts Club donated. It's been exciting to see this dream come true. Just think, Paul will get to perform on it for Crawford Cup this year!

It is a relief to have basketball season over. My team had their second loss in the stake



tournament last Wednesday night. I have gathered all their jerseys and turned them in and hope they find a different coach next year (not really; I didn't mind it so much. At least as a coach I keep more under control and don't get in fights with the referees like I almost did when the twins were playing and I didn't think the refs were calling things fairly.)



Saturday was the beginning of another merit badge powwow. We had an excellent turnout with over 420 participants. We are looking forward to the Gentry's coming next week. They have a week off for spring break and wanted to share in Ricks' Women's week with Julianne.

I feel for whoever is going to be sustained as Bishop to take Bishop Moon's place. He is a tough act to follow. Besides that, it is getting harder to cope with the many problems placed on a Bishop's shoulders. It takes a remarkably strong man to last five or six

years. I am thankful for the experience I have had and am glad it is behind me.

March 22, 1994

[Mom] We now have a new bishopric. Lyle Godfrey is bishop; Randy Ruger and Tony Watson are counselors. It was a special meeting with some tears shed but it's nice to have the change over and get on with the business of the ward. Lyle is a wonderful man and certainly capable of doing a fine job. Mike was really disappointed that Bishop Moon will no longer be teaching the priest quorum. He is so knowledgeable and made the Sunday lessons very inspirational.

I spent part of last week planning a Daddy-Daughter event only to have it cancelled because three of the girls' dads couldn't come. We kept changing the date trying to come up with a time that would catch most of the eleven girls but we couldn't. I guess we will back away from it for a few months. We were trying to get it done before two of the girls graduate this month.

I am enjoying my Merrie Miss class. They are enthusiastic and so bright and talented! I looked across the aisle in the Primary room Sunday and watched Daddy sitting with his eight Blazers. They are also very



enthusiastic and eager and I couldn't help thinking how much good he is doing as bouncer (I mean teacher) of that lively bunch!

I have done something the last two weeks that I haven't done in 25 years! I sewed SaraKay a dress for Easter. Once when Steph and Shauntel were tiny I made them each an Easter dress but that was about the last time. With my time opening up I decided I would save myself the expense of buying one this year. My biggest mistake was telling SaraKay

what I was doing. She immediately became enthralled with the project and every step of the way she has been at my side (and in my hair and under foot). She undid the pattern the first day, laid it out on the game room floor and sprinkled glitter all over it because she wanted her dress sparkly. She took the material and laid it out upstairs on the carpet and commented that it was way too big for her body. She took the zipper and played with it until it was dingy. While I was babysitting McKay last Wednesday, she put on the bodice





(no skirt, zipper, sleeves, etc.) and showed him her new dress. He had the funniest look on his face when he saw her in it and said very seriously, "Where's the bottom?"

I realized that once I got started there was no turning back; come Easter morning, she would wear whatever was sewn, despite how it looked. Well, I only have the sash left to complete. It's a floral print with puffy sleeves, a long full skirt and a pink pinafore over the top with a big sash in the back and two tiny little rabbit buttons at the neckline. She is delighted with how it turned out and the boys can hardly believe that I did it!

When I called Stephani to see how she was getting along, I commented that I had redone the collar three times to get it right and she said that she made a dress for Katie for Christmas

and that she noticed when it was all completed that the collar in the back was uneven. She was so tired of the project she told Lindsay, "I am not unpicking that collar! Katie will have to leave her hair long until she outgrows the dress! "There's more than one way to skin a cat."

Daddy had his second Wood Badge overnight training session last Friday and Saturday. I spent most of Saturday cooking in preparation for Sunday and Monday's company. Jeanie and Scott arrived last night about six and we had a great time visiting. Uncle Staff was in the area since he and his family are moving to Rexburg soon and he was locating housing over the weekend. He arrived at five, visited with me for a while and then Jeanie and Scott arrived and we all enjoyed supper together. Luckily I cooked things on Saturday and put them in the freezer. After my activity day, I hurried home and put things in the oven.

Jeanie and Scott came this morning to get the key so Scott could get into the chapel and practice the organ. Maren and Christian went to school with Mike and Paul. It's been nice



for Jeanie and Scott to stay at Dad and AlvaLu's for the week while they are back and forth from Rexburg for Women's Week.

Mike had his MORP date Saturday night and when he got home he said that Kami was lots of fun. He said she really surprised him when they walked up to the front door as she was bringing him home. She said to him, "I want to give you a kiss good night!" Before he had a moment to escape (or pucker up) she handed him a Hershey kiss and started to laugh. She told him that she knew when she got home her Dad (a bishop) was going to ask her if she gave Mike a kiss good night and she wanted to see the look on his face when she said, "Yes!"

Last week, Sister Ricks, Becky's last companion, dropped by on her way to Provo and visited. She said Becky is a wonderful missionary! FYI: Steve and David are awaiting word from graduate schools and Andrea just handed in her last official paper of her college career. Steph is close to full term, and Randy is putting in long hours working two jobs. Linds just returned from a weeklong trip to San Jose.

Tim just got some rollerblades and has 1,000 new bruises all over his body. Paul is getting ready for Crawford Cup, and I am enjoying my new carpet. We are looking forward to Grandpa and Grandma Larsen being back in their home this week or next. The legislature is winding down and will be over for another year. I have managed to



keep all of their plants alive except the African violet. My folks are getting ready to visit Lisa and Don and see their new baby, due the end of March and their new home.

[Dad] This last week I was able to go to Jackson Hole again. There are some very good people there who bend over backwards to help. Rod Everett lets me use his office, calls and sets appointments, and takes me to



lunch. I am impressed with the amount of money and potential there is in Jackson and hope that some of the people I have been talking to will remember the Council in their wills.

I was glad to raise my hand to sustain the new bishopric. There is no doubt they will be hard-working and spiritually directed. I had another Wood Badge staff development session last Friday night and Saturday. There are certainly some wonderful people on that staff and I feel like I am able to make a contribution.

Paul received his offer to work at Little Lemhi this summer. He is very excited about the opportunity. He will work as a commissary assistant. We have just received information about Philmont and All Hands Conference in Anaheim in August. We haven't had time yet to digest the information and get excited.

I am sure proud of each of you. John and Becky, from your letters we sense that you are serving well. May you be blessed with success in your labors. All the joy from a mission isn't immediately manifest; most of it will be in the hereafter, but your whole lives will be affected by the experiences and relationships. DAD

March 27, 1994

[Mom] Monday evening Jeanie, Scott, and family arrived from Arizona and came to supper. Staff also joined us and we topped off the evening with a musical program.

Tuesday evening Daddy and I attended the annual Scout Recognition Banquet in Pocatello. Each spring a banquet is held and the council honors those who have earned their Silver Beaver and other prestigious awards for their volunteer service to scouting. Wednesday evening was a similar banquet at Ricks College for the northern end of the council. I always enjoy going to events around Idaho Falls because usually I see someone that I know from Shelley and it is fun to renew acquaintances. Sure enough, I did see someone—Maurice and Doris Johnson and

many of their extended family were there to see a son-in-law honored. We had time for a brief visit. Dad and I were seated next to the executive for United Way for the dinner and it was interesting to visit with him about Idaho. He has recently moved to Idaho from Wisconsin and most of his family still lives in the Midwest. We enjoyed visiting with him. He told Dad that he had just returned from having surgery at the hospital in Iowa City that is affiliated with the medical school that Randy attends. Small world....

Friday evening was our high priest annual banquet and our mixed quartet and Dad's barbershop group provided the entertainment. I had been struggling all week with laryngitis and had to fake most of my part of the musical number but I got through it without having a coughing attack so I considered myself lucky. Our ward was in charge of clean-up and so we had a long night by the time we helped with the mountains of dishes.

Saturday Daddy spent most of the day painting his office in Pocatello and getting moved in. One of the other scout professionals was moved to Idaho Falls which freed up a nicer space for Dad and he wanted it cleaned up before moving in. By the time he got home Saturday afternoon he had also painted the hall and done other general





cleaning to spruce things up. He was really worn out but grateful to have it taken care of. We had planned on doing some yard work yesterday but the cold, brisk wind kept us from wanting to even stick our head out the door so we have postponed for another week.

I attended the Snake River Junior Miss Program last night and really enjoyed seeing the girls perform. I knew almost every girl because of Mike and Paul's associations with them over the years. It was special to see how hard they had worked to be prepared for the evening. It took me back a few years to when my own daughters were competing and I was

grateful that I could relax.

Following the event, Mike asked if he could go for ice cream with friends and Paul wanted to go with Merritt so I ended up driving myself home. As Dad and I got ready for bed I mentioned to him how grateful I was for the protection afforded our family from day to day. We visited for a minute and went to bed. Just before midnight Mike came to check in. The room was dark but I could see him silhouetted against the hall light. He was standing in the doorway with his hands cupped and his arms slightly bent. We visited for a minute about the results of the competition and I asked him why he was holding his hands like that. He commented that he had done a stupid thing and injured his hands. I got out of bed and we went into the bathroom to look at his hands. He and his friends had tried to do a Chinese fire drill and a girl in the front seat had taken off in the car when he got out. In the confusion Mike fell into the gravel along the edge of the road and was covered with dirt and had gravel imbedded in the palms of his hands.





We soaked his bleeding hands and tried to clean out the gravel as best we could. He went to bed and I lay awake for a long time thinking about all the possibilities of such a crazy deal, but mostly about how grateful I was, again, for the Lord's protection. Mike has been under a great deal of pressure lately with preparing for the ACT, getting the garden center ready to open, Chamber's tour, play practices, and running for a student body office.

Paul is not all that far behind with all the demands on him. Tim made a hockey stick, bought an end for it at WalMart, and he and his friends have been playing hockey at the church tennis courts several nights this week. In school his badminton partner hit him in the face with a racket and he is

sporting an enormous black eye.

SaraKay wore her new homemade Easter dress today. When I walked into the chapel, she was visiting with several elderly people on the back row and announcing to everyone that, "Mom made my dress!" Knowing me as they do, I am sure the women in the ward were as amazed as SaraKay was. I am not famous for my beautiful handwork as most of you probably know.

[Dad] The only way to see a rainbow is to look through the rain. (2) The best remedy for a short temper is a long walk. (3) Patience is the ability to let your light shine after your fuse has blown. (4) If people were not meant to have a midnight snack, why do they put a light in the refrigerator? (5) Talent is what you are blessed with. Skill is how you take care of the gift. (6) Life is strange. You can skate on thin ice and end up in hot water. (7) Television will never replace the newspaper. You can't swat a fly with a rolled up TV. (8) We can't all be



heroes because someone has to sit on the curb and clap as they go by. (9) What do you call a bunch of rabbits hopping backwards?" A receding hare line. (10) Give none of yourself to others and eventually very little will be worth having.

I saved that last quote above intentionally. I really believe that the more we give of ourselves to worthy causes, the more of us spiritually there is. Look at your grandparents. I know how much each of you thinks of them and their example. One of the best ways to enlarge your soul is to get outside of yourself, put time and effort into great causes. That is why you see so much growth in a short amount of time with good missionaries. A person all wrapped up in himself makes an awful small package.

It was a thrill to have Staff and Jeanie and Scott and family here for FHE last week. After listening to Christian play and then after Jeanie and Scott played a duet of a Beethoven number, I couldn't help thinking how much Grandma Barbara would have been thrilled to hear such beautiful and powerful music from her old piano.

Christian and Paul both signed contracts to work as commissary assistants at Little Lemhi. They don't get paid much (\$58 per week,) but they will have all the food they can eat and a lot of good work experience.

April 4, 1994

[Mom] Happy Birthday new baby Bennion! What a nice way to start the week. We were having breakfast when the phone rang



and the operator asked me if I would accept a collect call from Stephani Bennion. I immediately suspected something since Stephani never calls collect. The baby had finally arrived. Steph and Linds had gone to the hospital a couple of nights earlier and stayed a while until they sent them home, so the last few days had been rather frustrating. We were so grateful to get the phone call and know that everything is alright. He weighed in at 10 and ½ lbs.! Shauntel is going to take some vacation time and spend several days with Stephani. We appreciate Shauntel's help and Randy's willingness to 'bach' it.





We hope all of you had a nice Easter. I enjoy Easter on conference Sunday. It just seems so fitting to listen to the General Authorities bear witness of the Savior and to be able to concentrate for two inspiring days on His life and mission. I know that many of you were not able to catch all the sessions. We are very fortunate to get all the sessions by TV or radio. We tried to schedule our work to be able to hear it all and it was truly a treat!

Prior to conference weekend an article in our local newspaper told about a professor (non LDS) at a Midwest university that did some studies on the growth of the Church and projections for the future. The title of the article included the words, "New World Religion". It is very exciting to see the tremendous strides that the Church is making in all the nations and growing in recognition and prominence. I was especially touched by Elder Hinckley's story of Governor Ford and

the Prophet Joseph. President Hinckley's kind treatment of the governor and the misfortune that befell his family is a good example of the way we should regard offenders in our own lives.

Last week was costume check for the play. I spent most of two days trying to remake some old suits for Paul and Mike. After many long hours of sewing, fitting, sewing, cursing, and more fitting, I decided that I was not going to get them to work. I had another idea come to me, tried it, and within a half an hour had two really sharp looking costumes ready for inspection. Mrs. Jensen loved what we came up with and I was grateful to have that project completed.

We have spent all of today getting things ready for Mike's campaign next week. He and two other candidates had a campaign party at the church this morning complete with

stickers, posters, signs, badges, confetti, and head bands. There were about 30 kids that showed up to help and they finished about two this afternoon. It is a relief to know that the bulk of that project is finished! Tonight the house is a shambles, but at least both the campaign and play are secured and not too worrisome now.

Daddy and the boys did some work in the yard over spring break. I need to get out in the berry patch and start working. Today it snowed so I felt good about putting it off one more day. Grandpa and Grandma Larsen got home Saturday and we went over for a few minutes tonight to wish Grandpa a happy birthday. Before going we had a conversation at the dinner table about Grandpa and Grandma being home. SaraKay asked which Grandpa was home. We asked her if she knew Grandpa Larsen and she said, "I remember Grandpa AlvaLu but I don't remember the guy!" The other day when she got home from Primary she told me that Sister Moon taught her that Heavenly Father had given her her hands. After a few moments, she asked me, "Who gave me my wrists and elbows?"

[Dad] I thought how much missionary work is like this statement from Lord Baden Powell on how to catch boys: "I like to think of a man trying to get boys to come under good influence as a fisherman wishful to catch fish. If a fisherman baits his hook with the kind of food that he likes himself it is probable that he will not catch many—certainly not the shy, game kind of fish. He therefore uses as bait the food that the fish likes. So with boys; if you try to preach to them what you consider elevating matter, you won't catch them. Any obvious 'goody-goody' will scare away the more spirited among them, and those are the ones you want to get hold of. The only way is to hold out something that really attracts and interests them. And I think you will find

that Scouting does this. You can afterwards season it with what you want them to have. To get a hold on your boys you must be their friend; but don't be in too great a hurry at first to gain this footing until they have got over their shyness of you."

To be effective in missionary work you have to use all of your ingenuity, perceptiveness, creativity, and inspiration to initially pique people's interest and cause them to give you a little time to build a relationship and become their friend. Then you can give them what you want to give them by way of instruction in the basics of the Gospel and bear testimony and have the Spirit witness of the truthfulness of your message. How proud I am of John and Beck and their effectiveness as missionaries. You are both effervescent and outgoing enough and well founded in personal testimony and understanding of Gospel essentials to reach anyone that is reachable. The discipline of arising early and working hard will pay huge dividends in the number of people you will reach. We pray for your protection and success.





of the rainbow. By the time they reach middle age, most of them have at least found the pot." Well, that bit of advice should help you make it through the week. Dad

April 11, 1994

It's the first day of the student body campaign and Mike and Paul were up and gone by six this morning. Mike

Let me share a few thoughts on marriage with you other kids. *Many marriages would work out better if couples operated on a thrifty-thrifty basis.

*Keep your eyes wide open before marriage and half shut afterward.

*Never speak loudly to each other unless the house is on fire.

*A good marriage is like a casserole—only those responsible for it really know what goes into it.

*Too many people marry for better or for worse, but not for good.

*To have a successful marriage—whenever you are wrong, admit it. Whenever you are right, keep your mouth shut.

*A marriage seldom goes on the rocks when a couple finds something in common to laugh about. For instance, there's the old wedding pictures.

*A bachelor is a man who never Mrs. anything.

I recently came across a quip that I can really identify with. It says: "Most men start out in life expecting to find a pot of gold at the end

scheduled some friends to help him draw with chalk on the sidewalks and other friends to help him hang posters and give out headbands. He had organized his skit for the assembly and SaraKay and I met him at the school at eight to unload the bikes for that. I took SaraKay into the library and we checked out some books and killed some time until Mike's skit was over. The halls at the school were covered with posters and handouts. I feel good about what Mike has planned for the week and grateful for all of the help his friends have given him. Saturday he took the ACT and felt pretty good about it. Following that he left with the priest quorum to attend a Jazz game in Salt Lake. They also got to see Legacy and tour the Joseph Smith Building. It was about 1 a.m. when he got home from Salt Lake.

Daddy, Paul, and Tim spent some of Saturday afternoon helping Grandpa Larsen dig out his sewer and remove some furniture from the basement that had been flooded because of septic tank problems. We can identify with that. It was so nice last year to get a new system put in and not constantly worry about it.



grandson. I felt better when I knew that Shauntel had arrived and was helping with the children, meals, and whatever else needed doing. I know Lindsay is a good helper but he is also going to school and work and a body can only stretch in so many directions! Stephani said that the kids greeted

Last Wednesday was Crawford Cup. There were 34 participants.....12 of them pianist. Although Paul didn't win, he did well and seemed pleased with his performance. Last Tuesday Daddy gave Mike and Paul each a father's blessing. They have been under a lot of stress lately with classes, elections, ACT, competitions, festivals, and the play. It is exciting to think that next year at this time we will be able to hold many of these events in the new auditorium. Daddy and I met last night with other members of the Fine Arts Association and planned the concert in May where we will celebrate the gifting of the grand piano. The auditorium is very beautiful and the community is so happy to finally have a nice facility for the arts. I have been very involved this year with Fine Arts but have decided not to be an officer another year. My doctor suggested that I calm down until I get these monthly headaches under control. For the next two years getting Mike and Paul graduated is enough to keep me gainfully employed.

I spent part of last week wishing that I was in Bloomington helping with a new

Shauntel with big hugs and have been mauling her ever since. Katie commented that she wished Randy could also be there to help take care of them.





We appreciated the letter we got from Steve this week. We are so grateful that Bonnie is enjoying good health and everything seems to be going well with her pregnancy.

My sister Lisa is going to have labor induced tomorrow. She and Don moved into their new home and this Thursday Grandpa and Grandma Richards are flying to Richland to spend time with them, Nate and Maureen, and Charles and Brenda. Hope all goes well with Lisa's delivery. Nate and family spent last weekend with Chad and Trish and Keith and Chelsea in Provo, blessing their first grandbaby. Nate called the other day to remind me of how old we are getting. (I didn't need that!)

Staff and Kathy moved to Rexburg and we hope to see them more often. It is so nice to have Grandpa and Grandma Larsen home again. They came over last week and we had a nice long visit. It gave us a chance to quiz Grandpa on

what really happened in the session and to get the truth regarding things. Grandpa is quite convinced that Larry Eastland is the man for the Governor job and Daddy and I are helping with that campaign in Bingham County before the primary election. Grandpa bought a boat while he was in Boise and so there will be two nice boats in the family.

The weather today is beautiful. Last week we had a couple of nice days but things were just too wet to do much. We are excited to go to Provo next week and celebrate two more Larsen's graduating! I am trying to arrange things so that SaraKay can stay here with the boys and I will have two free hands to help with Laurel Ann during the proceedings! I know there will be a Cottam grandmother there anxious for time with the baby, too, so we'll have to share. It is always wonderful to attend graduation and celebrate with other happy parents and family members. We are immensely proud of Dave and Andrea and what they have accomplished! David called this week and said he had received word that he had been accepted to the MHA program at ASU in Phoenix although he has to be accepted to the MBA to get the full program he wants. It could be summer before he





hears. Steve is also playing a waiting game with his master's program but I am proud of both of them for getting all the schooling they can. I am sure it will pay dividends. P.S. Grandma Ilene just called and said that Lisa just had a six and one half pound little girl today!

[Dad] There aren't many things I can think of that your mother hasn't already covered. Orchestra is getting to be more fun as my lip and control come back. Shenandoah is shaping up and it is fun to rehearse with the soloists. Friday I went to a Dutch oven dinner for everyone who helped with the merit badge powwow. It was a lot of fun and excellent food. I was reminded of how many great friends I have in the Blackfoot District in scouting circles. The candy bar sales for tickets to the Expo kicked off Saturday. We had prizes for boys who sold certain amounts and money turned in at the end of the day. The first day sales worked well. Friday I had a planned giving meeting at noon in Idaho Falls and had some excellent men there and appreciated their feedback and help. I especially appreciated Dad's involvement and support. It has been great to have him more accessible. SaraKay commented the other day, "The trouble with parents is they are so old when we get them that it's hard to change their habits."

Katie asked me on the phone, "Grandpa, what year were you born?" When I replied, "In 1943," she exclaimed, "Wow! If you were a baseball card, you would be worth lots of money!" She didn't realize what a card I am. Dad

April 19, 1994

[Mom] I should first give you the results of the student body elections. Mike won, although many of his close friends didn't. He does have a very good group to work with, though, and I think it is going to be a group that will

set the right standard for the rest of the school. When Mike was thinking about being a student body officer verses getting on the Seminary Council, I reminded him that as a student body officer he could wield a great deal of influence and that I felt like the Lord could use him in that spot as well as on the Council. He and Paul worked together all week and ran a fun campaign. The smartest thing they did was to tear up four big double-sized sheets, make headbands with all kinds of crazy sayings about Mike, and hand those out every day of the campaign. The kids all wanted to wear them and they were great advertisement. Paul wore the same one each day that said, "Vote Mike, He's my brother!" One of the kids at orchestra told Daddy that he thought Mike would win the election because he had so many friends and also he had a little brother who had a lot of friends, too.

Paul and Tim both got good scores for their festival performances. Paul got a 98 and Tim a 99. Paul tried out last night for scholarships, competing against 16 other pianists. The 8-9 grade group that competed before Paul's had 25 in it. I was so impressed with the talent of the contestants! Paul did not place but he did well. He was one of four boys in a field of 41 contestants and he was



enjoying the odds. When he completed his number, he made two sweeping bows to the audience and drew some laughter as well as applause. One girl told me that she saw Paul's quartet perform at school festival last week and that they had the judge laughing with their antics during the performance of "Bill Grogan's Goat". They got their "1" rating as did Mike's quartet.

Wednesday night was our first practice of the community choir. Three violins and one cello

accompanied us which was a bit unnerving since I have never led an orchestra group before. I visited with Linnea Hammond last night about my fears and she gave me some pointers. I feel so inadequate that I would gladly give away the leading of the choir to anyone that would take it.

Yesterday Dad and I attended the dedication of the new Snake River High School auditorium. Michael Ballam was the guest performer and spoke to us about the arts and the influence for good they have upon our young people. He cited studies that have been done in regards to the influence of good music, art, drama, etc. He made a fuss about the new piano, which pleased our Fine Arts group immensely! We sat behind Grandpa and Grandma Larsen. Grandpa has been having problems with his leg and he has been in a lot of pain the last few weeks. He and AlvaLu were both headed to the doctor





made a fuss!

Daddy had a Wood Badge weekend and didn't get home until about four on Saturday. SaraKay and I worked in the yard and I got my flower bed cleaned. We've mowed the lawn and now we've got to attack the raspberry patch. We're getting things arranged so

Monday. We hope that everything will be alright.

Thursday evening we attended a campaign meeting for Larry Eastland. Grandpa was the keynote speaker and did a masterful job of reporting the results of the legislature and some of his feelings about his property tax bill. Friday we attended a temple wedding of one of Dad's co-workers. As we sat in the sealing room a group of young couples from ISU came in. They looked so beautiful and vibrant! It made me homesick for my own grown children.

I thought about Becky yesterday since it was her birthday and wished that I could pick up the phone and call her and visit about what is happening in her busy life. I hope she had a wonderful day and that someone knew it was her birthday and

that we can get away for BYU graduation on Thursday. There are few occasions that I enjoy more than BYU graduation!

This Sunday our choir provides the music for stake conference. I know it will be a very emotional experience for me to lead "Oh How Lovely Was the Morning!" I can't sing it





without thinking about the beautiful letters we receive from Becky and John regarding their missionary experiences. Our ward choir is combined for conference with 3rd Ward and they sound like angels!

Last night while I was at scholarship tryouts, Mike was at work and Tim was at a basketball camp. Daddy took care of SaraKay. He read her the story of the tortoise and the hare and also a story about a moon mouse. When he finished and told her it was time for bed, she asked if she could have a piece of cheese and a carrot for her bedtime treat. Who says that what we see and read doesn't influence behavior! We are looking forward to our trip to the Midwest come the end of May. We hope Joshua doesn't grow too much before we get there. Take lots of pictures, Steph.

[Dad] I just got home from spending a day in Jackson Hole. It is always interesting to spend a day there meeting people. I know there is a

lot of evil in the world but I also find a tremendous amount of good and thoroughly enjoy meeting people and talking to them about their feelings and experiences. I had a quarterly review with Brad yesterday and was pleased with his feelings about my performance. I had the opportunity to tell him how much I enjoy my job and the unqualified support my wife gives me. I have an ever-increasing sense of the long-range value of what I am doing and the importance of Boy Scouts as a vehicle for transferring ethical values and patriotic appreciation for this country and our heritage. I also enjoy working with young boys and helping to mold their attitudes and perspectives.

We are looking forward to dress rehearsals this week and the performances of Shenandoah next week. The orchestra is coming together on its part even though the 1st trumpet is sometimes a little out of whack. I am also excited about Stake Conference—our combined choir is going to be so good! Your mother does an excellent job

of leading even though she isn't very confident of her abilities and worries.

April 25, 1994

[Mom] This past week was full of joyous experiences; first and foremost was attending the graduation ceremonies for Dave and Andrea. I never cease to be amazed at BYU, the beautiful campus, and the inspiring things I see and hear while I am there. The commencement and convocation were so inspiring that I am still pondering





on what was said and the application that it has for me.

At the conclusion, Elder Packer pronounced an Apostolic blessing on the graduates. The Spirit was so strong during the meeting that I felt very close to tears. When we finally made our way through the throngs of well wishers and located David and Andrea, David was in tears and I couldn't hold mine back any longer. I know how difficult it has been for them to reach this goal and that they have felt the Lord's watch care over them.

I am so grateful that you children have been able to attend the "Y". Last night we visited with Grandpa and Grandma Larsen and Grandpa asked me, "What are you going to do when the day comes that your children can't attend BYU?" I guess we will go somewhere else when that day arrives, but until then I will continue to be grateful for the wonderful influence it has in our lives. Steve and Bonnie were able to join us for Thursday's festivities but on Friday Bonnie had to work so Steve came alone. He helped me

with Laurel Ann: I think she thought it was Dave because she was totally at ease with him and eventually fell fast asleep in his arms.

Bonnie is finally looking pregnant. She and Steve have fixed up a cute room for the new baby and everything is in readiness! We appreciated them being a "bed and breakfast" for us while we were there. Andrea's parents and grandparents were there for some of the events and it was a pleasure to become reacquainted with them. They are so gracious and sweet.

David and Andrea planned a little get-away following convocation for a few days. Imagine our

surprise when we arrived home from conference yesterday and they were here! I regretted that all I had planned for dinner was tacos. I keep wondering why the Holy Ghost didn't inspire me to have a roast, but maybe we were so busy mowing lawns Saturday I wasn't listening. We thoroughly enjoyed having them here! About 10:30 last night when it was time to hit the sack, we could hear Dave and Andrea, Mike, Paul, and Tim all downstairs listening to CD's and talking and



laughing. It was so noisy that I knew Dad and I couldn't sleep so I said to Daddy, "I am going down there and shut things down for the night." All Daddy said was, "Good luck!" When I entered the bedroom, David and Andrea were dancing, Mike and Paul were lip sinking and Tim was sitting on the bed eating cold cereal from the box. The scene reminded me of crazy times long past and a wave of nostalgia flooded over me. So much for shutting things down.

Saturday evening we had a stake conference meeting at 7:00 and I was conducting the music so Dad and I headed over early. We hadn't been there very long when a terrific windstorm came up and for a few seconds the power went out. We could tell that it was really blowing but didn't realize until after the meeting that a mini twister hit our area and did all kinds of damage to roofs, tipped over campers, lifted garages off of their footings, tipped over trees, and scattered debris everywhere. Ferrell Wray had the back window on his new van shattered by a flying rock and our neighbors had their camper turned completely over onto its top.

As for us; the picket fence that we used to hide our wood box was ripped off of the cedar posts, the posts were split, and a pallet was even tossed from the wood box into the garden area. Our fence is now lying in the garden area. I haven't dared go look at the back of the house. So many homes lost shingles on sections of their roofs facing west that I'm sure we'll have the same problem. My kitchen window is

splattered with mud and Daddy's car that was parked at the stake center during the storm looks the same. Everywhere I went today I saw trees with branches split off and other damage. I guess we are fortunate that we didn't have more damage than we did.

Conference Sunday was very nice and it was rewarding to provide the music. We received a lot of compliments. Daddy said that I should go ahead and get this copied and sent. He has a lot of responsibility for a scout expo on May 6-7 and things are really hectic. He has orchestra three nights this week for Shenandoah...busy guy!

May 1, 1994

[Dad] This past week has been rewarding. The production of Shenandoah was really outstanding! It was a miracle to be able to pull it together with changes, building the set, practicing with the orchestra, and to do everything in five days since the opening of the auditorium. It was thrilling to see how well



the kids did and how good they felt about it. They are good kids and enjoyed working together. Mike and Paul were great on stage. You would have been proud of them—acting, singing, and looking handsome. It was fun for me to be in the orchestra; we actually got better each night. There were a number of places we had never played before when we went through the dress rehearsal.



The major effort this week is the Scout Expo and Camporee at the Eastern Idaho Fair Grounds for the whole council. It looks like about 6,000 scouts and scouters registered so far and more signing up each day. The Family Affair is right on the heels of the Expo next Monday night. I know that your mother will feel a burden lifted when that is over. We have been going over our plans for Philmont Scout Ranch the first week in August as well as our plans for Disneyland the third week and getting excited about those upcoming events.

Mike is working hard in the garden shop. Kelly really likes him and Mike enjoys it. Paul had a first orientation meeting regarding his camp job this summer and is doing what mowing he can in the meantime. Tim and Shane Jenks worked 5 hours at the cemetery last Saturday. We are grateful for the income the kids have to help with their needs.

Let me finish my page with a few thoughts. **The person who's busy pulling on the oars hasn't got time to rock the boat. *Some people get caught in their own mouth traps. *Contrary to what most teenagers*

*think, the key to happiness is not the one that fits the ignition. *The big problem these days is not so much earning our keep as keeping our earnings. There are a few kinds of food that have Calories that don't count, such as: Food on Foot—Food eaten while standing has no calories. Gravity causes calories to bypass the stomach, flow to the leg and into the ground. TV Food—Food eaten in front of the TV has no calories. Radiation leakage negates the calories in the food and any recollections of having eaten it. Food On Toothpicks—Any food impaled on frilled*



toothpicks, like sausage, cocktail franks, cheese and olives have no calories. The insertion allows calories to leak out. With that bit of wisdom I shall bid you adieu.

[Mom] It was nice for Daddy to write first this week and tell you about Shenandoah. It was really a special production and especially nice to have Daddy involved. Last night Linnea Hammond called about concert business and expressed how much she appreciated Daddy in the orchestra!

I suspect that by now most of you got your letter from Randy and Shauntel. I can't let Randy's teasing me about my philosophy about vacations go without defending myself. He wrote of their upcoming summer activities and said that Shauntel was determined to enjoy whatever they did. This she gets from her mother—a determination to enjoy a vacation at any cost—"but we'll be glad to have it over and get back to our regular schedule." I need Randy to know that I inherited this attitude from Grandma Larsen.

Once, years ago when Daddy and I were first married, we were visiting Grandpa and Grandma Larsen during the winter and Grandma got it in her head that we were all going to go sledding and have fun in the snow. Well, none of us really wanted to get all bundled up in the first place to go out in the cold but she kept pushing and finally had us all out the door and into the car.

Seeing our lack of enthusiasm for the whole thing she exclaimed, "We're going to go and have a good time, even if it kills us!" Perverved ideas about having fun run in the family, Randy.

We got a call from David last night informing us that he is now employed by Geneva Steel doing bookkeeping for the next few months until they leave for Arizona. He will work full time at Geneva and part-time at the MTC. (We were wondering what you were going to do in your spare time, David.) Daddy and I made a quick trip to Idaho Falls Saturday afternoon to attend an 85th birthday celebration for Uncle Frank. Aunt Nonie died about a year and a





half ago and we have tried to keep touch with Uncle Frank. When we first got to the open house, a little group of children were there at the house having cake and ice cream. We thought it was special that these neighbor children felt welcome to help him celebrate too. Most of the guests were very elderly and they made a big fuss over SaraKay.

Saturday evening the activities committee sponsored an evening for honoring the old bishopric and it was very enjoyable.

I spoke to the Young Women in one of the Pingree Wards yesterday on Individual Worth. I always get up tight about those assignments but Daddy helped me come up with some ideas and after a lot of worrying and studying I finally had it ready. It seemed to be what the leaders wanted me to say and the girls were very attentive and sweet. One thing that I had not intended to say but that I expressed was how much I valued and loved my mother for her contributions to my life. I don't think I will ever outgrow my need for her counsel, encouragement and comfort. I dread the day that she will no longer be around to share my life. Since this weekend is Mother's Day I should end this week's letter by expressing my love to my mother and also to Alva Lu for the influence they have on me and for their loving concern for each of us. (Amen! note

from Dad) What a blessing to have a righteous and faithful mother!

May 1994

[Mom]This past week has been like getting ready for a wedding: details, details, details. Saturday was the Scout Expo at the fairgrounds. Daddy had all kinds of preparations to make for it including finalizing plans for the night show, setting up a popcorn booth, helping

with the free stage, and the physical arrangements of hauling in plywood, tables, and chairs for the booths. Along with this was the task of having his Blazer troop (10 boys) prepared, notified, and assigned for the overnighter and Saturdays activities. This was complicated by the fact that tomorrow is the Fine Arts Concert that I am co-chairman of and I was trying to take care of all the details for that including practice schedules, checking with guest performers, programs, flowers, invitations, auditorium scheduling, and a host of other particulars. Daddy and I have both been about ready to drop...but we got through the week and after tomorrow the pressure will be gone.

The Expo was a terrific success and I think the council felt rewarded for their efforts. The most frustrating thing about the weekend for me was that there was no phone system set up and I was receiving numerous calls from people needing information and I had no way to reach Daddy except to wait for him to call. That kind of situation always drives me nuts and that's about how I felt by Saturday night when it was all over. Tim came home from school Friday and was packing to get ready to go. He inquired as to what the situation would be and I informed him that the council was expecting about 6,000 scouts and their families to attend. Tim replied, "Oh, no! Do

you know how obnoxious scouts are, Mom!" Anyway, Tim got ready and braved the hoards of obnoxious 12 and 13 year-olds and had a nice time.

One rather interesting event on Friday night, unbeknownst to those of us in the grandstand area who were

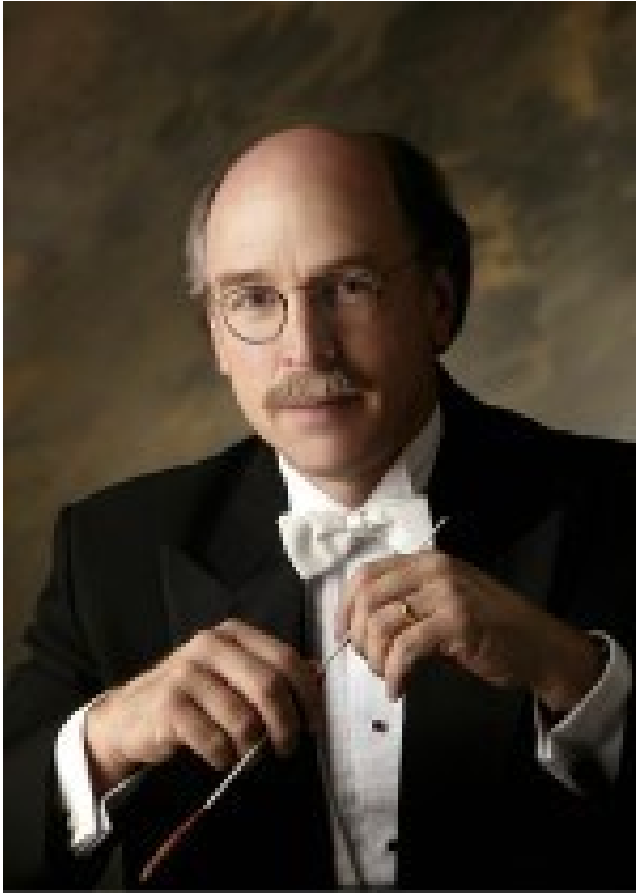
watching the night show; a tornado warning was issued about 9:00 and the police herded some of the troops that were not in the grandstands into a building for protection. The Lord must have been watching over the encampment because the storm never did hit the fair grounds.

(Tuesday) I spent today in the garden trying to find the raspberry plants. Normally it would have been a frustrating situation, but I have been so stressed over all the details of the concert last night that it just felt good to know it was over and that I could be outside enjoying the sunshine. The concert was a success and attended by over 800 people. I had some regrets about the length and logistics of some of it but I guess we live and learn. It was interesting to me that the things I worried about the most were the things that turned out to be the problems. I should have strongly voiced my concerns when we were in the planning stages but sometimes I underestimate my feelings and let other people talk me into things that I have a gut feeling against. Such was the case with parts of the concert. Daddy's sister, Karen, was one of the guest performers and she did a masterful job. I am anxious to be released in a couple weeks from my Fine Arts position and hand over the responsibilities to another.



This week is full of special events such as the Chambers Parent Dinner Concert and the Continuous Scripture Reading Fireside. Before we know it, school will be over. The kids have been busy mowing lawns and even Tim seems pleased to have the work. Steve called to say that out of 12 applicants for a job at the hospital in Provo, he was selected. He gets full benefits and works 24 hours a week. He is also working two other part-time jobs. It was interesting for him to go to the interview and be interviewed by a woman that knew David and thought for a while that David was applying for the job. We are so grateful that both Steve and David have found good jobs and can get some experience in their fields of study.

I appreciated the opportunity Sunday to visit by phone with each of the "away gang". Even John and Becky were given permission to call and it was a real treat to hear their voices. As Daddy and I went to bed Sunday night we visited about each of you kids and the blessing you are to us. We recognize that we are enjoying a time of peace and prosperity right now and we constantly express to the Lord our gratitude for his watch care over our family. We know that each of you is doing your best to live true to your convictions and we admire you for the righteous choices you are making.



Grandpa Larsen had knee surgery last week and has been recovering from that. The first few days were pretty rough but the swelling is going down and he seems to be in less pain. He has been so active that it is hard for him to sit around to heal. AlvaLu is going to have extensive surgery on her stomach Thursday and will be hospitalized for 3-4 days if everything goes well. They ran extensive tests on her and found no cancer, which was a big relief. She has been having difficulty eating certain foods and decided to go ahead with the surgery since the problem can be solved. Remember her in your prayers.

Last night at the concert

while I was chaperoning some children in the hall before they went onstage, I had a chance to visit for a minute with Julie Martin about her husband, Larry. About a week before Christmas he was diagnosed with a brain tumor and was told he had only a couple months to live. He had heard of a treatment in Japan that had been successful in treating this kind of cancer and a wealthy friend of his put up the \$60,000 that it took for him to travel to Japan and have the surgery. I had not seen Larry until I attended Shenandoah and then I only saw him at a distance. I could hardly tell it was him. He looked as if he had aged 20 years. His head was bald and he had an enormous scar running from the front of his head to the center back. He is unable to do much and he fights depression constantly. As Julie was sharing with me some of the trials they have been through, she told me that when Larry was diagnosed with cancer, a close personal friend of hers dropped in and told her of the time her husband nearly died in an accident. She said to her, "Julie, your life will never be the same again." Julie said that was so true. Their whole existence has been altered. I haven't been able to stop thinking about how fragile life is and how important it is that we relish each day and recognize how



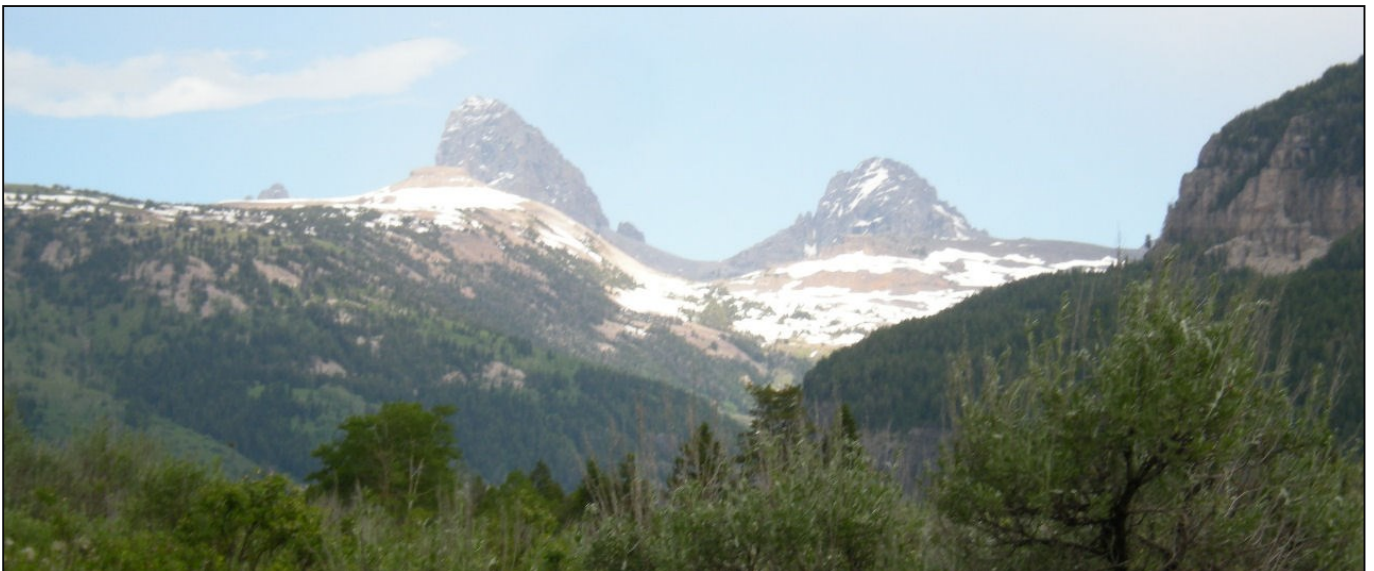


fortunate we are to be healthy and whole.

[Dad] As hectic as this past week has been—it has been very rewarding as well. The Expo was a tremendous success with few complaints. We had thousands of scouts and scouters who had a taste of Scouting on a grander scale than they will ever experience

short of a national jamboree. Hundreds of volunteers worked to make it all possible. And incidentally, the Council did make money off the activity which will enhance our ability to deliver a quality program to a greater number of boys.

The Family Affair on Monday night was a





Daughter Party but the rain has put a halt to that and so now we are back to finding another night when 27 people can all arrange to be there. Hah! Do I sound a bit sarcastic? I am. We have planned and rescheduled this event four times and I am about ready to give up on it and just let the time slide by until my girls graduate. It has freed me up today since I don't have potato salad to make, baked beans to cook, wood to gather, film to buy, wheelbarrows to load, camping gear to

choice experience. It would have been better if it had been a little shorter, but I don't know what I would have eliminated. The orchestra and community choir were really a thrill to be a part of. Your mother did a great job with leading the choir. It was an inspiration to observe the professionalism and excellence in the performances by Karen, Laura Griffith, Troy Hunter, and Corey Katseanes! The performances by the kids were wonderful!

gather, and hay bales to haul for the party. One good thing about cancelling the party is that if we do it another time Daddy might be able to come. Since he went to scout camp today he was not going to be around tonight to help me.

It is so rainy and wet outside that I can take care of details that are pressing. It seems hard to believe that in 10 days we will be

Thanks for remembering your mother on Mother's Day. She definitely is one of the greatest mother's ever!

May 17, 1994

[Mom] Daddy left this morning to go to Treasure Mountain Scout Camp to help construct a commissary. Today dawned very stormy and overcast and he wasn't sure how much they would get done but he decided to haul the lumber and supplies to the camp and at least have them on hand if the weather should clear.

Tonight was our Merrie Miss Daddy



leaving for our vacation to Iowa and Indiana. The kids are working to get the cemetery and lawns mowed and finish up school. Far be it from me to go off on a vacation half-cocked. (I thought Randy would appreciate that.)

Let me fill you in on some family matters. Alva Lu had her surgery on her stomach and esophagus last Thursday and came home late Saturday. She has been on a liquid diet every since and is struggling to keep anything down. I guess it just takes time for the body to adjust to the surgery and start functioning again. I went over to visit yesterday and she looks pretty pale. Grandpa is a good nurse but he is recovering from his knee surgery and has not really had time to rest like he should. I know it is just a matter of time and they will both be up and about but it is hard to see them feeling miserable.

Grandma Richards called to fill me in on Keith's trip to Canada. As some of you remember, Keith was dating a freshman girl from Canada. They really liked each other but the girl's folks were hesitant to have her getting married so young. After the semester was over, Nate and Keith made a quick trip to Canada and visited with the family. To make a long story short, the wedding is set for July second in the Cardston Temple. Due to distances most of the extended family is not going to be able to attend but Maureen is hosting a family get-together on July 9th in Richland and Aunt Kathy may be making the trip and maybe I will go with her. That will be during the time Grandpa and Grandma Richards will be back East so they will see them when they return.

I received an announcement for Tiffany's graduation and from what I understand she is planning to attend the "Y" next year. Would anyone care to make a graph showing the yearly cousin fluctuation at BYU? That would be interesting. Last year were Chad, Trish, Steve, Bonnie, David, Andrea, Keith, Chelsea. This year: Chad, Trish, Steve,

Bonnie, Keith, Maggie, Chelsea, Tiffany.

One item of business that Mike reminded me to include in this letter: he got a 30 on his ACT. He is delighted and has reapplied to take it again and see if he can better his score. Also, Steve called last Friday with the news that he made it into the Master's program at the Y! Also, Daddy has a new calling and is the High Priest instructor. Now that is going from one extreme to the other.

One of the young men who spoke in church last week on the topic of the priesthood was listing off the duties of the different offices and he couldn't come up with anything for the High Priest so he asked the Bishop what their duties were and the Bishop said, "To sleep in church." (We've got several in our ward that are magnifying their callings.) I do think Daddy is pleased with this change of assignment and that the quorum will enjoy him. He has also been asked to serve on the scout committee and will be valuable there with his experience and insight.

I got the raspberries weeded (you can come visit now, Dad) and they are looking very nice. I think I am finally getting the gist of raising berries. That is something I have wanted to be able to do. The way I figure it...if we have troubled times and nothing to eat but food





storage and garden stuff, I could survive with a nice piece of whole wheat toast with berry jam on it. SaraKay helped me weed the patch and she found a potato beetle. I told her if she would feed it that she could keep it for her pet (she has been bothering me about a pet and I can't face having a dog again) so she got a container and had a pet for several days. I think she got the desire out of her system and she hasn't mentioned a pup for several days. Being an older parent has its drawbacks such as decreased energy but I have increased wisdom so I compensate for my age by being so clever. Well, I can tell it's time to quit. Mom

May 23, 1994

[Mom] Daddy left early this morning for Island Park to help with the cement work on the new commissary. I think he has decided that his development job is going to be put "on hold"

until after our trip and Wood Badge. Before he left I told him to be careful and not have a stroke or heart attack.

Two of the council's professional staff were disabled this past month—one young man with a stroke and another fellow with a heart attack. Assignments for camps have been rearranged to fill the void left by these two men. It has been such a traumatic thing for the one man who is only 34-35 and who was newly hired to be camp director. What a blow to his young family who were just getting ready to buy a home and settle in from their move. The bright side of it is that he is doing well and doesn't seem to have any serious limitations from the stroke.

This week will be full of preparations for leaving Friday. It has been so fun to think about getting away and putting aside home and pressures for a week. Of course, traveling for two twelve hour days with SaraKay in a car will not be exactly stress-free but maybe a change is as good as a rest.

I like this time of year because I get to go to the year-end programs where the kids are receiving recognition for their year's activities. A few days ago we attended the Chambers' Parent Dinner Concert. I am so grateful for Mike's opportunities in that group and especially his involvement with the quartet. He has come a long way in confidence and



poise. Last night his group sang at Baccalaureate and received lots of compliments. They were seated on the stand during the proceedings and it was kind of an “upper” for him. This week he will be dining with the school administration to discuss next year’s student body business and he is excited about that.

Mike and Paul were among 200+ students who qualified to attend the Continuous Reading Fireside for Seminary. This year the guest speakers were Eldred G. Smith and his wife. They brought artifacts and family heirlooms belonging to the Prophet Joseph and Hyrum and told inspiring stories about the early days of the Church. The clothes they brought were what Hyrum wore the day he was murdered and the bloodstains were still on them as well as several bullet holes that show that the mob shot Hyrum numerous



times even after he was dead.

The students were able to view the artifacts following the program. They had the original small box that Joseph borrowed to keep the golden plates in when he first got them. It was a very touching presentation. It is always reassuring to see the many students who choose to make the scriptures a daily part of their lives. Many times as I watch the kids receive their awards I think about the influence that this group of kids has on the entire student body.



Another special occasion we attended was the annual Young Men’s Standard Night. A woman from Rigby who speaks about the youth being Israelite Warriors was invited to speak. She has spoken to various youth groups throughout the area and she was both inspiring and entertaining. She taught the concept of the responsibility for the young men to stay worthy and be prepared for the work of the Kingdom. Tim



unmistakable. He has started sleeping anywhere, anytime he gets the chance, for hours at a time, especially on Sunday afternoon. And he is always hungry, even after a big meal. Lest I forget the good signs: he has been working long hours after school with the cemetery mowing and other lawns and has hardly complained at all. I'm proud of his efforts!

was wondering if he was going to enjoy it and when he heard that Dad and I were invited to attend, he became concerned that we would be the only parents there and embarrass him. I tried to convince him that there would be lots of parents there but he remained nervous. We made a little wager...him that there would only be about 20 parents total and I bet that there would be at least 21. When the evening was over he admitted defeat. Not only had there been enough parents in attendance to help fill the chapel and overflow and into the cultural hall but he had enjoyed the presentation and there were also refreshments served. What more can a twelve-year-old ask for? Which reminds me—he will soon be 13. The signs of his impending teen status are

Daddy enjoyed his first week teaching the High priests. He told them that while teaching the Blazers he had to work hard to keep the boys under control and that he had been told he would have the opposite problem with them. That seemed to get a laugh out of the group and Daddy got a lot of compliments from the class following his lesson. He was noticeably pleased with how Sunday went.



We experienced a small miracle last Tuesday with our Daddy-Daughter party. The weather had been so stormy and awful that morning that we cancelled and began trying to find another time to have it. By 3:30 the weather cleared and it was warm and pleasant. The girls began to call and ask if there was any chance we could have it anyway. I called the other leader who was visiting her daughter in Idaho Falls and she hurried home and in an hour and a half we gathered, cooked, organized and left for river bottoms with 11 excited little girls and their Dads. We couldn't have asked for a nicer evening: warm, no wind, and lots of fun. We ended with som'mores and campfire tributes between Dad's and daughters. It was a huge success and I felt such a relief that it was over.

I received a call this week from Rick Tew who is the Wood Badge director. Daddy is on the Wood Badge staff this year and will be at camp on Father's Day. Rick suggested that anyone wanting to send cards or gifts to their Dad for Father's Day could give them to him (Rick) and he would see that they were delivered that day. Please send your cards a little early and I will get them over to Rick. I think it will be a nice surprise for him.

Grandpa and Grandma Larsen are both recovering nicely from their surgeries and Grandpa dropped by this morning to return some dishes. They are going to escape for a few days and go to Island Park and relax. They are scheduled to go with a group to Spain for 10 days in June so they are trying to get better and be ready for that trip.

I visited with Grandpa and Grandma

Richards last night and they are looking forward to their trip East and the Church History sites and Hill Camorah Pageant. We ought to schedule our Larsen and Richards' reunions for next summer so that the "away gang" can schedule around those occasions. It would be fun to have the married kids attend the reunions if at all possible.

June 6, 1994

[Mom] We arrived home yesterday about 4 o'clock from our trip East. As we passed through the lava beds between here and Idaho Falls someone commented about getting home to "grey Idaho". I had to admit that the scenery in our hometown wasn't quite as spectacular as some we had seen in the last 10 days but home looked beautiful to me and it felt good to know we had been protected in our travels and accomplished our purpose in making the trip. I would like to briefly mention some of the highlights and include this as our official record of "Trip East '94".

On Friday, May 27th we left about 7:00 a.m. Several days earlier Daddy located a luggage rack at Don Mangum's station and installed it on the van. We removed the center seat and





made a comfortable area with foam pads and pillows and blankets. The boys bought a Game Gear and in the long hours of traveling they took turns enjoying that pastime. We also had several books, lots of treats, a large atlas, and a Traveler's guide. We arrived about 4:30 in Denver and spent a pleasant evening with Mark and Rita and family. The only problem we encountered was a large cat that Mark's family had adopted, but I kept my distance and tried to go where it didn't. It was wonderful to get to visit Mark and Rita in their home and well worth the extra time it took. They were very gracious and kind to us.

Saturday morning we left about 6:30 for Shauntel and Randy's. We knew it would be a long day but we made excellent time with Daddy driving. We had food enough in the coolers that we were able to eat as we traveled and we arrived at Coralville about 7:30 that evening. We really enjoyed seeing the beautiful farms in Nebraska and Iowa and the different farming practices and terrain.

Shauntel and Randy have a very nice situation with their own yard, a picnic table, modern apartment, and nice

neighborhood. While we were having a barbeque Saturday night we saw hundreds of fireflies. It was a unique experience for all of us!

About 10:30 Jonie called and said that she was en route to Coralville and would arrive about 1:00 a.m. We had offered to meet her in Minneapolis on our way back from Stephani's but she wanted to see Shauntel and Randy, too, and so had driven from Cass Lake with her two little girls. They arrived about 1 a.m. Daddy and I went to bed earlier and Shaunnie and Randy stayed up and waited for them and helped them get settled.

Sunday morning was a sweet reunion as we met Sydney and Cory and got reacquainted with Jonie. Since our meetings were at 1:00, we took the children to a nearby park and they played on the equipment and we all fed the ducks. It was very relaxing. SaraKay still talks about feeding the ducks at Shaunnie's. It was quite a job getting us all ready for church but we managed and enjoyed seeing the ward and meeting some of the members. Thanks to Shaunnie's stickers,



markers, paper, and other supplies as well as Tim's lifesavers we survived sacrament meeting with our noisy bunch of preschoolers. Following the meetings and a delicious meal, Jonie, Sydney, and Cory left for home. Jonie had to be to work Monday at four. Originally she was going to stop in Minneapolis and stay with Jeff's sister but early Monday morning we received a call from her saying that she was safely home. We

appreciated her sacrifices to spend those few hours with us. She had driven for two ten hour shifts with two very active preschoolers all in about a 27 hour period! Thank you, Jonie, for making that long trip to be with us.

Sunday evening Randy took us to see the university and his place of employment and the hospital. It is certainly a marvelous facility! Monday we drove to Nauvoo. We regretted that we didn't have more time to tour all of Nauvoo but I knew that SaraKay would have her limit. We got to see some faith-promoting things. We then drove to Carthage. While taking the tour of that facility, the guide asked us if we were LDS. When we said that we were, he informed us that President Benson died earlier that day. It was a very poignant experience for us all as we entered the Carthage Jail, listened to the lecture, sat in the room where the Prophet was killed, and thought on those events that have had such a profound influence on our lives.

It was early evening before we bid Randy and Shauntel good-bye and headed for Bloomington. We arrived at about 12:30 a.m. at Steph's and found them waiting. Even little Sam sat straight up in bed as we were unloading and talked a



stream. Tuesday morning brought another sweet reunion as we met Joshua for the first time and became reacquainted with the "Bennions". While there we were able to tour the building where Linds attends classes and see some of the campus. We went on a picnic, toured Little Nashville and fascinating shops, and went to the Children's Museum in Indianapolis. We appreciated the efforts of Steph and Linds and Randy and Shauntel to show us the sights and introduce us to that part of the country. We appreciated the comfortable beds and delicious meals and all the little and big things they did to make our



stay so wonderful! Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedules!

We left Indiana Thursday and spent that night with Shaunnie. Friday was another big driving day. We arrived in Rapid City, South Dakota about 7:30 and checked into a motel. The boys and SaraKay quickly were in their suits and into the pool while Daddy went hunting for a grocery store and supper. Before too long, Mike arrived back at the room with a dripping and somber SaraKay. Her first words of greeting to me were, "I almost died!" Paul had been carrying her, slipped, and both of them had gone under water for a second. She had had enough of swimming for the night and so the two of us just lay on the bed and watched the Knicks and Pacers battle it out until the rest of the family joined us.

We had originally planned to spend all of Saturday in the Black Hills seeing the sights, but as we studied the map and miles still ahead, we decided to tour for part of the day and then get in as much travel time as we could so that we would not have



such a horrendous day Sunday of traveling. Saturday morning we left about 9 and headed for Mt. Rushmore.



It was a special delight for me to be in the Black Hills since the brief time that I lived there as a child had left such an indelible impression on me. Mt. Rushmore was more beautiful than I remembered it and the visitor center and all the information we learned was truly inspiring. It was a new experience for us to be tourists since that role is not one we have assumed very often. We fit right in with the others, toting our camera and

taking snapshots of all the interesting and amazing sights. Our brief interactions throughout our trip with people from all over the world were reassuring and pleasant. We kept a running tally of license plates we saw and we only lacked West Virginia and North Carolina out of the 50 states!

Next we visited Devil's Tower and prairie dog town. The forest rangers stationed at each place were helpful and well-informed. One of the things I had wanted to do if time permitted was to visit the ranch where I lived during my first and second grade years of school. Although it was a little off the beaten path, we found our way to Alladin, Wyoming. The scenery in the Black Hills was just as beautiful as I had remembered it! Alladin, population 15, was a general mercantile store and small post office. It looked exactly like I remembered. I doubt that anything had been changed since we moved from the ranch 41 years earlier. (Daddy commented that hopefully some of the food items had been rotated.)

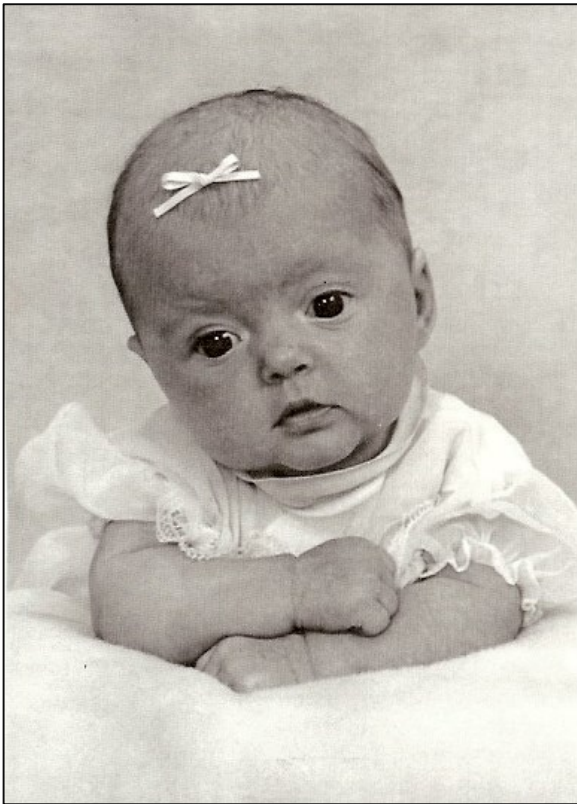
The lady at the counter was very sweet and I explained to her my desire to see the ranch. She remembered the Richards' brothers and



made a phone call to the Bunny's who purchased the ranch years later. I visited with Mrs. Bunny and she gave us permission to drive back into where the homes had been but she said that no one was living there now and that unless we had a four-wheel drive vehicle, we probably would not be able to make it as the roads had not been maintained. Such comments conjured up in my mind the memories of the many times Grandma Richards got stuck on those same

roads and we decided that that would not be a wise thing to do. We did try to locate the old schoolhouse I attended but it had long ago been demolished. Daddy bought me some antique spools as a remembrance of our visit, and we thanked the people at the Mercantile and headed West. We arrived in Cody, Wyoming late that night and stayed at a motel. Sunday morning we continued on through some of the





most beautiful country I have ever seen. The whole trip west had been full of wonderful scenery from serene mountain lakes to majestic rock mountains! Soon we entered Yellowstone Park and enjoyed seeing Yellowstone Lake, (20 miles long and 14 miles wide and COLD) and Old Faithful. As we left the Park we saw the Tetons on our left and beautiful farm land in the valley stretching for miles. I thought back on everything we had seen and experienced and felt an overwhelming gratitude for the Lord's tender mercies in creating this beautiful world. We had opportunity to see parts of Idaho, Wyoming, Montana, Nebraska, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, and South Dakota. Each area had its own charm and beauty! As we arrived in Moreland, Daddy looked over at me and I returned his look of relief and gratitude. We both knew that on a trip like

this so many things could go wrong, including car problems and accidents, so we were grateful that we had been able to do it without a hitch. We took lots of pictures and Tim even purchased a few souvenirs.

Before leaving for the trip, I called Steve and Bonnie and Dave and Andrea to tell them our plans. I commented to Bonnie that she shouldn't have the baby while we were gone. She assured me that she wouldn't. Last night Steve called to inform us that they were the proud parents of a 4 lb. 12 oz. little girl, Rachel Jean Larsen. Bonnie had awakened about 5:30 Monday morning in labor and they went to the hospital. Her water broke and the doctor decided to induce labor even though she was a month early. Six hours later, little Rachel was born. Although small, she was healthy and didn't need an incubator. Mother and daughter (and proud dad) are doing fine and will be home Wednesday. Congratulations to you! (Thanks for waiting until we got home from our trip!) (Tuesday morning) Yesterday we mowed lawn, weeded the garden, unpacked, washed laundry, packed for scout camp and went shopping for groceries. Mike touched base with all his friends who missed him terribly (or so he says) and last night Tim and Paul slept on the trampoline with the neighbor boys in a marvelously concocted tarp tent that was supposed to protect them



from the pouring rain we were experiencing. I guess summer has begun! When we weeded the garden yesterday morning, the wind was so cold that SaraKay wore her winter coatonly in Idaho! Anyway, it is wonderful to be home!

[Dad] There really isn't much I can add to Mom's account of our trip. There are so many feelings and thoughts that are difficult to capture on paper. As we traveled across the breadbasket of America we were so impressed with the beauty and majesty of this great land. We also sensed the goodness and solidarity of the people we saw and met. The basic goodness of rural America and



much of urban America cannot be denied. We get such a warped view from the media! There are problems, I do not dispute that. But by and large, America is full of good, God-fearing people, who are trying to do what is right for their families, and full of confidence and optimism for the future.



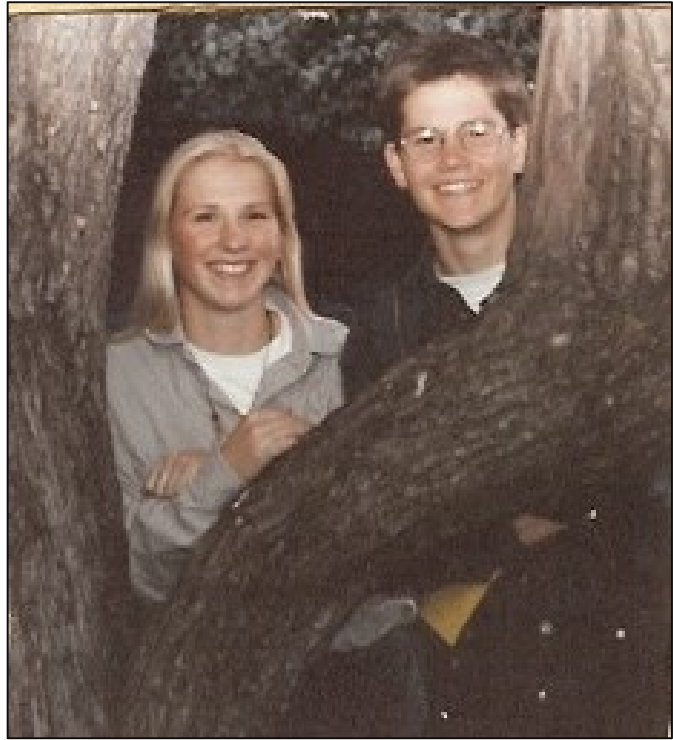
I have had my faith buoyed up by this trip and what we saw and experienced. Nauvoo and Carthage were a real highlight for me. The Church really knows how to do everything it does in a most excellent way! The pioneers were so full of ambition and creativity. It was a real eye-opener to go through the Browning house and witness the inventive genius they evidenced in creating a comfortable living as well as in their weapons and tools. To watch a demonstration of how they built wagon wheels, the role of the blacksmith, and so on—filled me with greater appreciation for the pioneers and all that they were able to accomplish. Carthage Jail was a poignant experience. Being in the actual place makes the martyrdom so much more real and also was a spiritual confirmation of Joseph as



a prophet. We were so blessed to have this opportunity. Love you all, DAD

June 15, 1994

Last week was a flurry of activity as we prepared to get Paul on his way to Little Lemhi. I've spent hours sewing patches on scout shirts lately. Daddy needed three shirts complete with patches, Paul needed two complete outfits, and Tim needed two, also.



We bought some used shirts, rounded up all the patches and shirts around here that we could come up with, and finally got the three scouts outfitted. Jeanie and family arrived Wednesday early afternoon, bringing Christian up from Arizona to go with Paul to camp.

Thursday evening was the first and last softball game that Paul would play all summer; one of the drawbacks of being gone to camp. Mike and Paul and Christian all got to play and I enjoyed visiting with friends and neighbors while I watched the game. It was fun to have Jeanie and kids here for a few days and to catch up on family news.

Daddy arranged his schedule to deliver Paul and Christian to Little Lemhi. When he arrived home Saturday evening after spending the night at Treasure Mountain with a work crew, he commented that he was glad he had been there to help Paul and Christian get their living quarters fixed up. The tent they had been assigned was pretty dilapidated and he repaired it and helped them get situated. We called Paul



yesterday about weekend rides and he was pleased with his summer job. I am anxious to get him home this weekend and find out the details of his week.

Tim leaves Saturday for Cedar Badge, a weeklong leadership training camp. He didn't want to go to scout camp again since he has all his merit badges earned for his Eagle. I've been trying to arrange rides for him since I will be a "lone woman" while Daddy attends Wood Badge as a staff member for the next 11 days. He was asked to be the professional adviser for this session but because of some of the other staff members failing to follow through, he has had to single-handedly take care of ordering, purchasing, planning, and delivering food for 65 adults for the week. It has been quite a project! He is in the bedroom this morning finishing up his packing. I hate these weeks when "the bucks stops here" and I have to figure out what to do in case of emergencies. We have set up a way of getting messages back and forth daily so that I don't feel so frustrated when things come up that I need his input on.

hold Rachel Jean Larsen. She is such a beautiful baby and so contented! She just ate and slept the whole time we were there except when we interrupted her schedule to change her and play with her a while. Bonnie looked like she was feeling good and recovering nicely. Her mother was there most of the week helping her get the hang of being a mother and doing a million other things to ease the load. Thank goodness for mothers!

We also enjoyed the chance to visit with Dave and Andrea and Laurel Ann Sunday evening for a few minutes. They have been "family sitting" for a few weeks for some dear friends; having a family of 7 has been quite a new experience for them! Andrea flew to Phoenix last week (June 3,4) to secure an apartment for them the first of August when they head south for school. She was impressed with the area and pleased to locate a lovely apartment that will suit them fine. Laurel Ann was crawling all over and full of energy. She is a cutie.

Monday morning Daddy and I left early for home. I had a Merrie Miss activity at 2:30 that

Sunday was ward conference and the choir pulled together a number that went very well. After a quick lunch, Daddy and I headed for Provo to see our new granddaughter. Compared to the many miles we had traveled in weeks past, the trip seemed short and sweet. We arrived in Provo about 5 and thoroughly enjoyed the chance to see and

afternoon and received word when I got home that Steve had called from Provo. I immediately called and he related to me the news of the test results on Rachel. He was understandably shaken and requested that the family join him and Bonnie in a fast on Tuesday. He related the things the doctor had said to them regarding the condition they were concerned about. I was grateful that Daddy and I had been with Rachel and knew firsthand what a vibrant and contented baby she was. I called extended family Monday evening and everyone expressed concern and said they would be glad to participate in the fast. I kept thinking yesterday while I was fasting about the blessings available to us through the gospel plan. I am gratitude for the sure conviction that God hears and answers our prayers and that in His wisdom "all things work together for our good". Of course I have had some anxious moments thinking about all the "what if's" but I have also felt a comforting feeling knowing that blessings had been pronounced and prayers offered in her behalf. We will let all of you know what is happening just as soon as Steve and Bonnie find out.

June 19, 1994

[Mom] I want to get this letter mailed out tomorrow and surprise Daddy and Paul and Tim. They are all away at camp and will return Saturday so if I mail this tomorrow they ought to receive it before completing their week at camp. Daddy left last Wednesday morning and has called from a cellular phone a couple of times to let me know how things are going and ask how I am doing. He left before the final news regarding Rachel had been received and was anxious, as were all of us to



know about the results of the tests. What a blessing and relief to know that everything is alright! Thanks to all of you who joined your faith and prayers with Steve and Bonnie's.

I've had a rather upsetting week trying to cover for all the things Daddy does around here. My biggest challenge has been dealing with the yard and garden and helping Tim complete all of his lawns before leaving on Saturday. He had a basketball camp all week for a couple of hours each morning and that really cut into our mowing time. We finally had to hand the cemetery work to the Jenks boys and just concentrate on our private lawns. Tim does a neat and tidy job with the lawns, though, and I was proud of him for taking care of business before he left.

He participated with about 28 other boys at the basketball camp. Part of it involved competitions with foul shooting, one-on-one games, and spot shooting. They had finals on the last day based on their weekly scores. Tim was the only boy to be in the finals in all three areas and he took second place in all three



competitions. Only first place got a plaque, though, and he was a little disappointed in that. He has seen a t-shirt that reads, "second place is the first loser" and he reminded me of that, but I reassured him that coming in second was a pretty strong showing!

We spent hours last week getting him ready for Cedar Badge, including altering scout pants, rounding up gear and then, trying to fit it all onto and into a pack. He had also been asked to furnish a small tent and that was tied to the very bottom. I could hardly lift it to get it onto his back and then he could hardly carry it once it was on. Saturday morning at six I took Tim and a neighbor boy into Blackfoot where we carpooled with two other boys and made the two hour trip to Treasure Mountain Scout Camp. I asked the driver if she needed my map, but she assured me that she knew the way. To make a long story short (and a two hour trip into a three hour trip), she didn't have her

camp clear and we made several stops at stores, motels, and even a dairy farm, to get directions and then turned around to retrace our miles. I was chewing nails by the time we finally arrived!

Upon arrival Tim had to carry his pack on an orientation hike and I followed close behind to assure myself that he would survive. When they reached their destination a very sweet scoutmaster greeted them and invited them to sit awhile and talk.

He asked them what they thought they were going to do at Cedar Badge and Tim answered (after considerable thought), "Have fun?" (wrong answer) and then the leader ask them if they had any questions. Tim was Johnny-on-the-spot with his question, "Do I have to carry this pack everywhere I go this week?" Well, that was enough for me and I took a few pictures and left. He seemed a little apprehensive and I had mixed emotions about leaving him there tied to that pack....



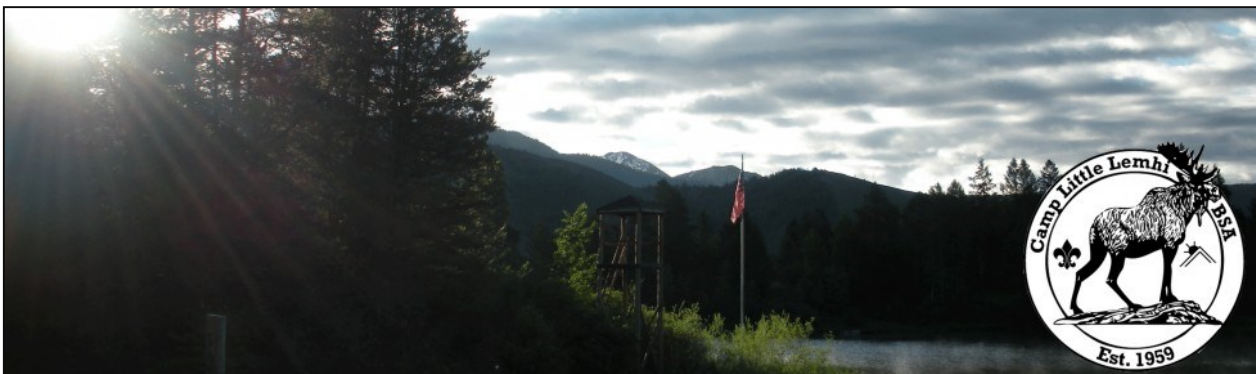
On the bright side—the camp was beautiful and the spirit in the mountains was so refreshing. For the few minutes I wandered around the camp I realized why Daddy wanted Tim to take advantage of the opportunity to be there. The camp is close to the Tetons and so beautiful!

Let me backtrack for a moment. Friday morning (Tim's birthday) we had a close encounter of the sewer kind. I had turned on the sprinklers Thursday night to protect the garden from freezing. I arose about seven the next morning and went out to check the water. There was water everywhere! The whole back lawn clear up to the hump by the patio was under water. The pasture over the NEW \$3000 sewer system was under water! Knowing how damaging that can be, I ran into the house and called our neighbor who was irrigating the pasture. He was already gone to work and his boys were moving pipe. No help from them! I yelled downstairs to Mike and Tim and within minutes we were all out trying to divert the stream of water that had broken through the dike and flowed over the sewer area. No sooner had we began diverting the water than we noticed an interesting phenomenon...the area that had been dug for the sewer and then covered over was settling because of the water running over it and a crevice was forming. This aggravated the problem because then all the water standing on the nearby lawn and all the water that had run the other direction decided to run back towards the crevice. We could see we had to damn (excuse me) the water coming from several directions and also try to bucket out

the pool forming over the sewer system. We got large buckets, dipped and poured, and brought wheelbarrow loads of soil from the garden to use in damming the running water.

Part way through our marathon Mike started singing, "Happy Birthday to you, Happy Birthday to you, Happy Birthday dear Tim, Happy Birthday to you." If it hadn't been such a critical situation I may have laughed, but under the circumstances there just wasn't time. After about an hour and a half of bailing water we got things under control and went into the house to recuperate. Luckily our quick thinking and bailing had saved us a major flood in the basement like the one we suffered years ago when the water backed up and all came up in the furnace room. I have been a little paranoid about water after that.

Last night Paul and Christian (and two tons of dirty laundry) arrived home about 6:30 from Little Lemhi. Luckily I had anticipated their arrival and prepared for the onslaught. I assumed that they were excited to see me but after a few minutes I realized that it was really the clean laundry, the hair cut, the warm bath and the video games that they had come home to enjoy. Not really—we had some good laughs and thoroughly enjoyed hearing all about their week's activities. They left today about five. It was kind of a lonely bench in church today with just Paul, Christian, SaraKay, Mike and me. I sent Daddy's Father's day gifts with the Wood Badge director so hopefully he had a nice day despite being absent from home. Mike spoke in church and expressed appreciation for





Daddy and I felt badly that he wasn't here to hear it. SaraKay gave her first talk in Primary and suffered from the normal shyness but managed to remember bits and pieces. In choir we prepared a number for next week, "A Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief" for the commemoration of the Prophet Joseph's death.

I better close. It's late and time for bed—lonely bed. Not really lonely. I have been sleeping with SaraKay since Daddy left and that is a fate worse than death some nights. She's inherited my sense of direction and some night's ends up with her head to the east although our bed faces west. (That doesn't make sense, does it?) One more reason for Daddy to hurry home! We love all of you. We pray for

you. We rejoice in your goodness. I called my own dad and expressed my love to him today and wished I could have done the same for Grandpa Larsen. He and AlvaLu are still in Spain but will be home this week. We've missed them! We love our letters from the missionaries and enjoy sharing their experiences through the mail.

June 27, 1994

[Mom] I just finished talking with Shauntel and Randy about the commemoration at Carthage. We watched it by satellite and thought we saw them several times when the cameras panned the audience. Sure enough! I described to Shauntel what kind of a hat she was wearing and the color of her dress and she confirmed that it was her. Our neighbors saw Randy and mentioned it to us this morning, also. Shauntel said that they arrived about 4:30 pm to wait at the gate before the program began. It was hot and there were about 2500 people waiting to enter. She said that every time a vehicle filled with folding chairs would need to get through the gate that the crowd would press against the gate thinking it was time to find a seat. The people



were again and again pushed back to let in cars and as the time wore on the heat began to take its toll and Randy commented, "We're going to have another mob with blackened faces storming Carthage if they don't hurry and get these gates open!"

I guess it was pretty chaotic for a while once they let them in but Shaunnie said it was a wonderful experience, especially to get to hear President Hunter. We had debated what to do about Paul and Christian because Daddy had picked them up at camp after picking Tim up on Saturday from Cedar Badge. They were not sure how they were going to get back to Little Lemhi and none of our leads for rides came through. As we talked it over with them, they said that they wanted to see the Carthage broadcast anyway so we decided to just take them back ourselves after the program.

We left here about 8:00 p.m. and headed for camp. Just a few miles outside of Blackfoot we passed a van and Paul commented that the boys in the van were his co-workers at camp. We pulled over and they followed, we unloaded their gear into the van, said our goodbyes, and we headed home. I felt like the Lord had been looking out for us and saved us a long trip. I had had an exhaustive day starting at



8:30 with choir practice, giving a talk on our experiences at Carthage during sacrament meeting, our choir performing, teaching the Merrie Miss class, and then speaking in Young Women's on testimonies. Following dinner and phone calls and home teachers, we had another choir practice and then attended the broadcast. Daddy and I were both grateful not to have to make the trip that night!



When everyone arrived home Saturday afternoon, it was a joyous reunion! The only hard thing was trying to find time to hear about all the week's events. Daddy came home crippled up and miserable. His heel problem of a year ago reoccurred, leaving him hobbling for several days. Saturday night he fashioned a cane out of an apple tree branch and Sunday he used it at church to get around. When someone in his high priest class asked him about it, he just commented that he thought he would use it so he would fit in with the others. He is supposed to stay off his foot for 48 hours and give it a chance to heal, but finding 48 hours has been challenging.

Paul told us about a near fatal accident at scout camp. Some scouts were canoeing and took a wrong turn and got their canoe wedged against a log jam. When the guides tried to free it, the current pulled the boat and boys under the jam. The current was so strong that one boy had everything he was wearing sucked off and another scout had his life jacket torn to shreds. I am sure the Lord was looking out for them all because no one drowned although several of them were

fished out from under the log jam. It made me feel grateful that Paul is working in the commissary (spaghetti and bread is a lot less life threatening.) He seems to be enjoying it although it keeps him hopping from six in the morning until late at night. We have had several scout leaders comment on what an excellent job he and Christian are doing. Last week Paul invented an award (a small Popsicle stick crate) that was presented to the troop that did the best job of getting their supplies back and forth with the least problems. He said it was a real hit at the campfire program and he is going to continue presenting it as a part of the final night's award program.

Tim's experiences at Cedar Badge weren't all as inspiring as we had hoped for, but he did come home with an appreciation for hot water and Mom's cooking. Another homecoming we had was when Grandpa and Grandma Larsen returned from Spain. They left again last night to go to Island Park to stay a few days and relax with AlvaLu's sister and husband. AlvaLu's daughter, Trina, has a little girl SaraKay's age that was diagnosed with leukemia. She has been back and forth from



Salt Lake getting treatment and has a long road ahead of her but it is something that can be treated so the prognosis is good. Keeping up with 13 children, and all the grandchildren really keeps Grandpa and Grandma on the run!

Grandpa and Grandma Richards are leaving this week for the East and the Cumorah Pageant and a visit with Don and Deniece. Shauntel and Randy will accompany them to the pageant. Keith is getting married this Saturday in Cardston. Dave and Andrea have completed their several week "live-in" experiences caring for a family of four children and are getting things ready for their move the end of July to Arizona. Bonnie called last night and let us know that she is spending the week in Idaho Falls with her folks so we are making plans to go and see Rachel and let the kids get a peek at her for the first time. We are looking forward to our weeklong visit from Steph and Linds the first part of August and just hope that somehow they can see Dave and Andrea before they leave for parts south. Becky and John both write regularly and are happy and "anxiously engaged." I haven't heard from Jonie since our trip but I always assume that "no news is good news. She was going to Washington D.C. with a delegation representing the Head Start program on the reservation and was looking forward to that.



So much of the time I was a peacemaker trying to resolve conflicts between members of the Wood Badge staff and the camp director. He is very autocratic and possessive about the camp and was continually doing and saying things that upset and alienated



[Dad] The past week and a half at Island Park Scout Camp has really had its ups and downs.

the volunteers. I spent three days using a bike and a crutch to get around and trying to

keep the weight off my left foot. Everyone was so considerate and thoughtful and helpful. The only thing that got in my way was my pride. I kept trying to do everything that I knew I should do and sometimes paid a dear price.

The whole experience made me appreciate the conveniences of life that we take for granted such as private showers, hot and cold running water, flush toilets, an external source of power so that you don't have the continuous noise of a big Detroit diesel generator, and solid walls that give protection from the wind, rain, and mosquitoes. I was the bugler for the course and had to play Reveille every morning at 6:30 and 5:45 on the last day. I also played for the flag raisings and retiring. I had a personal commitment with myself that I would be dressed, groomed, and ready for the day when I played each morning. It was hard after I tore my ligament and when we were up until 12:00 or later each night, but I did it. We had many rich



spiritual experiences on the course and

developed warm friendly relationships with staff and participants alike.

Last Sunday as we had sacrament meeting, we met in a fire bowl on the edge of a small lake. The fish were jumping as we partook of the Sacrament. Also, a couple ducks took off from the far end of the lake and flew in formation straight at us, the full length of the lake, and then split off and went around us when they reached our end of the lake. The Spirit was so strong as we met in that outdoor temple of the Lord! There was hardly a dry eye anywhere and we were filled with such reverence and awe for the beauties of God's creations. I felt like I was able to make a contribution with the lessons I taught and the part I played in the course. After an Honor Trail we were able to say our goodbyes and hug each other. I received compliments such as, "You have caused me to redefine the meaning of Scout professional." "You are the greatest professional scouter I have ever met."

The leadership skills that are taught are fundamental and important to any leadership role—not just in Scouting. The methods employed to teach them are powerful discovery experiences coupled with instruction and discussion. I am so grateful to be a part of a movement that I can see is making a difference in the lives of youth and adults and on the right side in the battle for the souls of men. It is my conviction that Lord Baden Powell was inspired to bring forth the Scouting movement. He was a spiritual man himself, unafraid to declare his allegiance to God and to insist on His inclusion in the Scout Oath. I am so grateful to be home in the bosom of my family. I love the Gospel and know it is true and that the rock that was cut out of the mountain without hands is rolling forth to fill the whole earth!



wouldn't budge off the side steps. When we tried to get her to move around she screamed and cried. Finally Dad suggested that we go to the hot pools. The minute she got into the warmer water, she settled down and began to enjoy the swim. Although the rest of the family migrated back to the main pool and slide area, SaraKay, Daddy and I just stayed where we were and had a relaxed time.

Yesterday we had the missionaries over for

July 4, 1994

[Mom] We spent today with Steve and Bonnie swimming at Heise Hot Springs. Steve came from Provo on Friday after putting in a big week at the hospital. Bonnie spent the week with her family in Idaho Falls and by Friday Steve decided the bachelor's life wasn't for him and joined her. Since this may be the last time this summer we'll have a chance for a good visit, the Bensons shared them with us. Last night we made a trip to Little Lemhi with Paul and Christian; they showed us around the camp and the commissary where they work. It was the first time Steve had been back to scout camp in 10 years and he enjoyed it.

This morning we left about nine and picked them up at Benson's en route to Heise. Jean took care of Rachel and the rest of us enjoyed a three hour swim. We wondered if SaraKay was going to last more than a few minutes in the pool. The water was a little cold so she

dinner. Getting things ready for that made Saturday an enormous day. Dad and I set a goal to get the dining area painted and finished up last week. I spent several evenings scrubbing walls to get rid of wall paper paste and then painting the initial coat of paint. When Saturday morning arrived I told Daddy that with all the cooking I had that day, I knew there was no way I was going to get the sponge painting done. So....Daddy did the sponge painting on the wainscoting and did a wonderful job! By about 10:30 that night we



were through with the room and happy with how it turned out.

Last week was a very trying one for Alva Lu's grand-daughter, Megan. The infection in her throat moved into her bones and she had surgery and had several bones in her palate and part of her cheek bone removed. The ward held a special fast for her Tuesday and Grandpa and Alva Lu took their trailer to Salt Lake so Carlos and Trina would have a "home away from home" while they stayed near the hospital. Megan is being fed through a tube in her nose and will be fed directly into her stomach for several months until other surgeries reconstruct her palate. It has been a very traumatic time. Remember them in your prayers.

[Dad] Happy Birthday, U.S.A.! And we know that Sara Kay's birthday is not far behind. We aren't saying much about it because we know she would drive us crazy, especially since she and Sue will be in Washington this weekend and we won't really be able to celebrate until the 11th. It has been great to have time with Steve, Bonnie and Rachel. She is almost seven pounds. Tomorrow is her actual due date. She is a beautiful little girl! I am realizing more and more the depth of joy and satisfaction that can only come through one's family. President David O. McKay said, *"Next to eternal life, the most precious gift that our Father in Heaven can bestow upon man is his children."* I so appreciate the kind words, notes, and tokens each of you sent me for Father's Day. It was hard to not be with family on that day. But Sue's preparation made it possible for me to receive a large package at

camp with notes from most of you. The only thing I missed were the phone calls. Victor Hugo wrote, *"The supreme happiness of life is the conviction that we are loved."* Thomas E. Kelly added this thought, *"When a father instills in the hearts of his children the conviction that they are loved, he has given them a Father's greatest gift."* I pray that you each have that conviction regarding both your earthly and Heavenly Father's.

With the time we will be gone in August we have had to anticipate and prepare. July is going to be busy. I'm getting things lined up for the Tiger Ear Booth the first week in September and the popcorn sale kickoff the middle of September as well as getting grant requests written and keeping things moving on our endowment campaign. It has been





July 11, 1994

[Dad] I was reminded last week why I don't want to be a bachelor. Thursday morning we left here at 7:30 and drove to Burley where we met Kathy and Dick. Sue, Tim and Sara Kay went to Richland, Washington with them and I returned to work. Mike and I were the only ones here until Saturday noon when Paul and Christian

hard to get around using a cane. But, my heel is healing slowly and letting me pick up a little more speed especially if I can do my work while sitting.

One of the additional responsibilities we have this month is closing up the church house each night. Sunday night Mike and Tim went with me (complete with uzzies and other GI Joe stuff.) Every door was open and lights were on everywhere. I'm sure glad we remembered it was our duty to lock up that night.

I want to brag a little about how well our redecorating turned out. It is really unique and beautiful! It has been good for your mother and me to work as a team. We have grown closer as we have worked together to create a physical environment in harmony with the spiritual feeling we want to have in our home. Let me close with a quote from the great UCLA coach, John Wooden: *"Things turn out the best for the people who make the best of the way things turn out."* Dad

arrived from camp. I met Sue and the kids again in Burley Sunday afternoon to bring them home. We got along OK with meals and housework, but I missed the sharing of each day's experiences, thoughts, and feelings with Sue. We have grown to be such a part of each other's lives that it is hard to be apart. The challenge of keeping up with meals and household chores as well as my work was a good one for me. We had chicken enchiladas, Buff Hansen pizza, shepherd's pie that Mom had prepared and frozen, and I even baked bread twice. For Sunday dinner I was able to cook a roast, carrots, potatoes, corn, and made gravy. I quit using my cane this weekend and feel like my foot is on the mend. I still have to be pretty careful with how I walk and how much I am on my feet. Another thing I realized was how long it has been since I have had a Saturday of my own. There were so many little repairs and things that needed attention and it felt good to get many of them attended to. Your mother can fill you in on her experiences in Washington, so I had better sign off and leave plenty of room for her.



[Mom] Getting home from our short vacation to Washington brought a lot of “catching up” to do even though Daddy and the boys did a wonderful job of taking care of things while we were gone. I enjoyed the opportunity to get to travel with Kathy and Dick. They have a Ford Explorer that had ample room for everyone and we visited non-stop for the 7 hours we were together from Burley to Richland.

It was so exciting to get to see Don and Lisa’s new home! It is a large, two-story frame house with a wrap-around front porch and double car garage. It is in an area that has 1-2 acre building lots and feels like country although it is just a few minutes’ drive from Richland. Nate was the contractor and did a wonderful job with it. Kathy and Dick and I contributed a little to the new abode by wallpapering the study. Don and Lisa hadn’t ever wallpapered before so we all worked together on the project and had a great time. Skyer and Whitney occupied Tim and SaraKay and they thoroughly enjoyed their stay. The new baby, Chauncey, was such a good baby that sometimes we nearly forgot she was around. She is a beautiful little girl and good to sleep through the night! We also spent time with Nate and Maureen and got to tour Nate’s new

shop. Chad and Trish have been staying there while they help Nate with a building project and so we also got to see their new baby and visit with them. We enjoyed meeting Keith’s new bride and

sharing in an evening barbeque with extended family and ward friends. Maggie is a beautiful girl and fits right in with the family. They are living in Richland for the summer and will be attending the “Y” come fall. Keith has a very good job at Hanford. Marlayne was there and we spent some time catching up on her news and activities. I teased Nathan about having three weddings in 14 months and he said that Chelsea has a boyfriend and they are wondering if things are going to get serious there. Chelsea’s boyfriend is from a nearby town and the wedding celebration would be simplified because of that.

Spending a few days with family makes me realize how much I miss the Richards’ side of the family and how nice it would be to be able to gather more often. It is especially gratifying to be with my siblings and see that they are staying close to the church. We discussed the Richards’ Reunion ‘95. It is our turn to host and we brainstormed about possibilities for locations. Daddy checked today with Brad Allen and found out that for a small fee we could have the reunion at Little Lemhi next August when scout camp is over. We would have full use of the lodge, cabin, waterfront, boats, kayaks, etc. It is only a couple miles from the Palisades reservoir and so we would



also have access to water skiing. We have tentatively reserved it for August 17th, 18th, and 19th.

Yesterday Daddy helped me pick berries and we got enough to put some in bottles! Grandpa and Grandma Richards will come a week from today and Dave and Andrea will come the 22nd for a few days. It is hard to believe that they will be so far away soon but we are pleased that things have worked out for them. We are looking forward to Steph and Linds' visit, our trip to Philmont and Disneyland, blessing Steve and Bonnie's baby, and hearing from Jonie, Shauntel, and Randy about their trip East. Grandpa and Grandma Larsen are in Salt Lake this week helping with Megan in the hospital while Trina and Carlos return home for a few days. I'm sure it is all very overwhelming with all the responsibilities they have at home.

I had a wonderful opportunity to visit with a sweet retired couple who knew Becky while she served in

Fayetteville. They have a son who lives in Pocatello and they visit him each summer and help him with his three sons. Several years ago his wife suffered a nervous breakdown and has been pretty much institutionalized ever since. A neighbor lady cares for the children during the day and it was through her that they were introduced to the Mormon Church and baptized. They

are such a refined and lovely couple and were so sweet to take time to visit me about Becky and the wonderful influence she had on the people in their area. They live in a retirement center and they commented that they still have people inquire about her. I guess she



performed once in the recreation center and they were very impressed.

They shared an interesting experience that happened to them shortly after they joined the church. A Baptist minister friend mentioned that he had a collection of old letters his mother had saved from the 1840's and he wondered if they would like to have them. Brother Greenwood read them (about 25) and immediately realized they were something the Church would be interested in since they dealt with the movement of the church west and the Kirtland period. He contacted a missionary and eventually the church purchased them all and now has them as a part of a growing collection of information about that period of time. The collection was appraised by a non-member and valued at about \$10,000.00!

July 18, 1994

[Dad] Our home is such a source of peace and satisfaction. The decorating we did turned out so well and it's rewarding to have it all come together with so little expense. Our yard looks pleasing as well. We are excited to have Arch and Ilene come this week. We've even had a couple of good pickings off our raspberry patch. I think we picked more in one picking than we have in all the time we've had the patch.

My new calling of instructing the High Priests has been quite interesting. It has caused me



to be more studious of the scriptures because I'm challenged to teach them something and keep them awake. Yesterday we were discussing disciplining your thoughts and purifying your heart. It is interesting to think about the relationship between your mind and your heart—your thoughts and your feelings. James Allen wrote, *"They themselves are makers of themselves by virtue of the thoughts which they choose and encourage; that mind is the master weaver,*

both of the inner garment of character and the outer garment of circumstance."

President Gordon B. Hinckley said: "Each of us, with discipline and effort, has the capacity to control his thoughts and his actions. This is part of the process of developing spiritual, physical, and emotional maturity." Each of us needs to be cautioned against those things that directly assault the righteous thoughts and intents of the heart. Such things as music that is not uplifting, pornography in any form, displays of violence, and settings where pessimism, criticism, contention or other negative influences predominate. We have been warned and forewarned and shall be like Marion G. Romney who said, "I shall be summoned to appear before the judgment bar....If I appear there without 'a pure heart and clean hands, I will have no justifiable excuse.'" We can take heart from Henry David Thoreau's statement, "I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of man to elevate his



life by conscious endeavor.” It does indeed take a conscious effort. Boyd K. Packer’s advice is most appropriate, “Once you learn to clear the stage of your mind from unworthy thoughts, keep it busy with learning worthwhile things. Change your environment so that you have things about you that will inspire good and uplifting thoughts. Keep busy with things that are righteous.” We will fill the time of this life minute by minute and hour by hour. If we don’t fill it with good, uplifting thoughts and actions, Satan will help us fill it with other activities that will bring our downfall. I am grateful for the feelings we get from each of you and the goodness of your lives as you pursue worthy goals, are involved in creative and productive work, striving to be obedient and worthy servants with righteous eternal purposes. I pray that each of you will continue to be blessed with good health, peace and harmony in your home, and joy and rejoicing in your eternal relationships.

[Mom] I awoke this morning to the sound of the phone ringing. Daddy was already up (as he always is) and

took the call. There is something foreboding about early morning or late night calls and this was no exception. Grandpa Larsen called to inform us that Mark and Rita’s daughter, Jessica, had been in an automobile accident and was in a coma in the ICU at St. Anthony Hospital in Denver. She was returning to scout camp where she has been working this summer and she lost control of the car and hit an earthen embankment at the

side of the road. We are holding a special fast tomorrow for her. Hopefully, by the time you receive this letter, she will be conscious and all will be well. Head injuries are so hard to assess.

We have been running around this morning trying to get things ready for Grandpa and Grandma Richards’ visit. They will be here shortly. They will continue on to Washington on Thursday and see everyone before they return home. They called when they got home from Deneice’s and said they had a wonderful trip. Grandma said the Hill Cumorah Pageant was marvelous and they were so glad to share





the experience with Shauntel and Randy as well as Don and Deniece.

We got another good picking of berries this morning and Tim talked me into raspberry cheesecake for dessert tonight. (He didn't have to talk very hard.) We missed Paul and Christian this weekend. The scout staff went to Jackson Hole. We called Paul Sunday and he said it had been a lot of fun. He just has two weeks left of his summer job and then he will be home and go with us to New Mexico for a week. I have really missed having him around and am happy to have some travel time with him so he can tell us about his summer.

Daddy's foot is on the mend. He has to be careful to not overdue or he pays for it. Saturday was a stay-at-home day for us and it was nice to have some time to get things ready for August. Dave and Andrea will be spending this weekend with us to say their

good-byes before leaving for Arizona. They've had a multitude of details to take care of and are still communicating with Arizona State in regards to admission into the MBA program. He would like to have the dual major but is still on a waiting list. He and Steve have been tenacious about pursuing their degrees and we are grateful that they are able (with the help of their sweet wives) to have this training. It is hard to believe just how many of our family are involved right now in college. We are grateful to a loving Heavenly Father who has granted health and strength and has opened doors for each of you on your road to your professions.

As I visited with Stephani I was reminded again of the struggles and sacrifices you endure while getting your schooling. Some people would say to us during our college years, "Oh, these are the best times of your lives!" That was a pretty bleak thought to me because life was hard, time was scarce, money was tight, and Daddy was occupied day and night with studies and deadlines. It was a time of growth and learning and blessings, but it certainly was not the best time—not by any stretch of the imagination. It did lay the foundation for future years and many wonderful times ahead.

It has been rewarding to receive letters from



Becky and John. People frequently ask about them and we respond that they are having some wonderful experiences although we can tell that they are struggling with the normal problems that plague missionaries. Becky passed her half way mark and John is quickly coming upon his. Mike is getting things ready for the high school opening social in a few weeks and Tim has been bugging me to take him school shopping. Life is moving so fast right now; the weeks fly by and soon summer will be gone. Next year at this time I will have a kindergartener! She is ready! She loves Primary and is often heard singing the songs she learns on Sunday. She is trying to figure out new words and occasionally she gets one wrong and sends us all into hysterics or shock. She went to Davis's to play the other day and came home and said they couldn't play because they got drowned! Come to find out, they got grounded!

July 25, 1994

[Mom] We've had a wonderful week with sweet visits with extended family. Grandpa and Grandma Richards arrived Monday afternoon and stayed with us until Thursday morning. It was so enjoyable to have them here! I am ever grateful for the continuing example of devotion they are to me. David and Andrea arrived Friday evening and left about noon today to return to Provo. We had a

wonderful weekend together. We especially enjoyed Laurel Ann. She was so pleasant and seemed to enjoy the activity of our busy household. She has Andrea's petite build and David's appetite! I hate the thought of not seeing her for a year. Babies change from week to week and it is fun to watch them grow. We all were thinking about the many miles that will soon separate us and tried to spend as much time visiting as we possibly could.

Friday afternoon Nate called and asked if Keith and his new bride, Maggie, could come and spend the night en route to a wedding in Idaho Falls. We were delighted to have them come. They arrived about 1:00 a.m. Saturday morning and left Sunday morning. We got up and left by 8:00 a.m. Saturday morning so that we could arrive in Island Park early and have a full day of boating with Grandpa Larsen. Daddy left for Little Lemhi to get Paul and Christian so they could spend the day with us. The rest of us went in the van and arrived about 11:00 at Island Park. The entire week had been so sunny and hot that we were disappointed to have it cool and stormy Saturday. We also felt badly that Grandpa had fallen the day before and was miserable with his back. Despite these obstacles we got the first group out to ski shortly after arriving and they had a great time.



By about 1:00 Steve and the scouts arrived and we had lunch. We just finished up when Grandpa and the first shift arrived and joined us. Daddy, Paul, Tim, and Christian then took their turn skiing. We also talked SaraKay into joining them on the boat and she enjoyed herself. Eventually the storm cleared off and it was a beautiful day. Dad and AlvaLu have a lovely new trailer and a peaceful spot close to AlvaLu's sister and her husband. It was so good of Grandpa to share his boat with us.

Several of you have asked about Jessica. We called Mark and Rita yesterday and got an update on her progress. Apparently they gauge progress in 8 stages. Jessica has been in stage 1 of unconsciousness this first week but Saturday she responded to slight stimulus of a ballpoint pen being opened and closed against a fingernail and her eyelids remained opened a few seconds when the therapist was working with her. Mark said she is now classified in stage 2. She has daily therapy to keep her limbs from atrophying. Mark and Rita are encouraged and grateful for the outpouring of love and faith in their behalf. Rita said that the doctor told them it was going to be an extended process of recovery and they should expect to go on with life now and settle back into their normal routine as much as possible. We are planning to visit them on our trip next week to New Mexico and hope to spend some time with Jessica in the hospital. She and Mike have been writing back and forth this summer and Mark thought it would be special for Jessica's "favorite boy cousin" to come see her. They feel that although she doesn't respond, she is aware and needs constant reassuring to keep her spirits up. We are grateful for the opportunity to spend some time with them.

Trina's daughter Megan is home from the hospital and Trina and the family and a nurse who visits their home several times a week will take care of her. She appears to be doing well and is happy to be back with the family again. These kinds of situations really put life

in perspective and help us be grateful for the gospel, health, and strength.

Paul is in his final week of camp. He and Christian looked so tired last weekend and are anxious for the summer work to draw to a close. We let Paul drive the Hornet back to Little Lemhi Sunday since this weekend he will be moving all his stuff home and will need more time and space than usual. I think he has learned a lot and enjoyed the opportunity. He told me that he realized he could hold his standards even when those around him were not holding theirs. Tim went school shopping last week and spent some of his summers' earnings. What a blessing to earn what you need to meet your individual needs and wants. I always feel such a relief when summer is over and the money is in place for school supplies and clothes. The Lord blesses us so much!

I thought we ought to mention our plans for the next few weeks in case any of you need to contact us. We will be leaving early Sunday morning for Denver. We hated to miss our meetings but Mark said that we would not be able to see Jessica unless we got there before evening. Seeing her is our top priority right now.

Sunday evening we will be with Mark and Rita in Thornton, Colorado. We will leave early Monday morning and drive to Philmont, arriving midday. Our mailing address will be Philmont Training Center, Cimarron, NM, 87714. Our phone will be 505-376-2281. This is a central phone but messages will be delivered to us and we will return your call. We will leave Philmont either Friday night or early Saturday morning and return home Saturday night. Sunday we'll attend Bonnie's ward in Idaho Falls where they will bless Rachel. Stephani and Lindsay may join us. Following a family dinner at Bensons, we will return home. Steph and Linds will be here Saturday and stay with us for the week, returning to Salt Lake on Saturday, the 13th. We are excited for their visit!

By the time I write again, David and Andrea will be at their new home in Tempe, Arizona. Hope all goes well with their move. Jonie may be taking a position in Arizona with her tribe while she completes her accounting training. We wish her well and pray the Lord's blessings in this decision. We hope to hear from Shauntel and Randy about their trip East. From everything we have heard, it was a wonderful!

[Dad] Mom has covered most of the news and I don't have much to add. I am feeling better physically and my heel doesn't bother me much anymore. Work has been somewhat of a strain with all the sweet family distractions. I have been lining up supplies and equipment for the Tiger Ear Booth and getting everything ready to send out announcements for the Popcorn Sale and get packets put together for each unit for August Roundtables. With the time we



will be gone in August, it makes it difficult to do everything with these other responsibilities and do justice to my Endowment Campaign. This week I am going to Island Park Scout Camp with our troop. I've lined up the leaders we needed to get through the week since our scoutmaster could only go Thursday through Saturday.

The family time we've had lately has been wonderful. Wednesday Steph, Linds and family will be in Nauvoo on their way to Shauntel and Randy's and then on to Idaho and Utah. We look forward to their visit after we get back from Philmont. *Did you ever wonder if nothing sticks to Teflon, how do they make Teflon stick to the pan? or, Why are there interstate highways in Hawaii? or, Why do we park on driveways and drive on parkways? or, Why is it that when you transport something by car, it's called a shipment, but when you transport something by ship, it's called cargo? or Why can't they make the whole plane out of the same material that they make the little indestructible black box out of? DAD*



Dear Becky and John,
[Mom] We have spent several hours this past week trying to get David and Andrea a computer to take with them to Arizona. Kent Fife was unable to fix their old computer and so he found some used parts that would upgrade it and work. We needed to have it ready by last weekend for them but Kent had a misunderstanding with the company and the part wasn't shipped on time and the computer was not ready for them. We didn't want to make a trip to Provo to deliver the computer so Daddy sent our computer since their old one will be like new once we get the parts. They are really struggling to come up with the \$5000 they need to get into their first semester at ASU. They have several thousand to pay in out-of-state tuition this first year until they can take out residency. It is going to be a struggle but they are very determined to do it. It was a teary good-bye when we loaded them and sweet little Laurel Ann into their car and said our final good-byes. What a beautiful family!

We have many sweet experiences ahead before the summer will draw to a close. It is hard to think that just a year ago we were on the final weeks of getting you ready for the MTC. Aren't we all glad that we don't

have to live last year over again? I know from



your letters that life is a struggle for you both even though you are finding joy in the work. Missionary work is exhausting! We are so proud of you and never a day goes by that we don't remember you in our prayers. As you have been able to tell from the letters, the Larsen's have had some tough things going on lately with Megan and now Jessica. Why is life so hard! Stephani called the other day discouraged about things and I was reminded



again of how challenging life is from day to



SaraKay has been enjoying the experience. We left early Sunday morning for Denver. The kids had work until 11:00 p.m. Saturday so we could not get away any sooner. We arrived at Mark and Rita's about 5:00. After some supper and a short visit, we went to the hospital to see Jessica. She is still in intensive care and ward members come

day. We miss you both so much! Everywhere we go people ask about you and we report good things. We pray for you; we love you.

P.S. John, Andrea told us about a couple of sisters that she knows that crossed your path in Taiwan and had strong praise for your strength and abilities as a powerful missionary. We love to hear such reports! We always like to hear of others who think as highly of you as we do.

in each night to spend the night. Her room was decorated with cards and letters from family and friends. Mark and Rita kept a journal and each nurse and visitor who comes is invited to write in it some of their feelings and impressions. They have chronicled with pictures each step of her experience starting with photos of the accident scene and including how she looked at each step of

August 3, 1994

[Mom] I am skipping my activities this morning and just relaxing. The past few days have been fun and interesting for our entire family. Even



recovery. We learned that on those first few days it was touch and go whether she would live or die.

Her neck seemed to be the most damaged area. From talking with those who talked with her prior to the accident, Mark and Rita feel quite strongly that Jessica was not feeling well and probably passed out and drove off the side of the road. They think she was unconscious before the crash because she had no internal injuries or broken bones—that

the opportunity to visit them and lend support.

Monday morning we left Denver and headed for Philmont. We arrived about 11:00 and moved into two roomy tents that were provided with beds, linen, blankets, pillows, and electricity. We eat three delicious meals a day in a cafeteria and have access to modern bathroom facilities. SaraKay spends her days at the “small fry” center and they do things such as horseback riding, painting,



she was totally relaxed at the time of impact. Seeing Jessica was interesting because although she is unconscious, she coughs, moves her limbs a little, and blinks her eyes. She is fed through her veins and is lying on an incline. As she opens her eyes, there is no sign of recognition. This week she will be moved to a rest home. Mark and Rita are trying to come to grips with the possibility that this condition may be permanent while at the same time continue exercising faith in her recovery. What a trial! I was grateful to have

playing and reading. Mike, Paul, and Tim have had opportunity to backpack, tour museums, do handicrafts, play sports, and today they are touring a nearby resort town. They have had a taste of being in the mission field and met people from all over the United States.

My activities have included tours, handicrafts, and hiking. These New Mexico mountains are so beautiful! Daddy has been in seminars everyday and missed most of the fun but we



have had such a nice family experience. This 136,000 acre cattle ranch was donated in about 1930 to the Boy Scouts of America by Waite Phillips (Phillips Petroleum) and has been used by the BSA as a camp, leadership training center, and back packing center ever since. It is a wonderful spot! We are leaving a day early in order to be home to welcome Steph and Linds and also to share in the blessing of Rachel on Sunday. We are so excited to have these wonderful experiences. I feel removed from the outside world, though, and hope all of you are doing fine.

Probably the nicest thing about our time here at Philmont is that we've had the chance to meet many fine people and feel of their goodness. Many of the participants here are volunteer scouts and have given years to serving youth. They are super people! We hope we have enriched their lives as much as

they have enriched ours! It has been fun to have Brad and Dantzelle Allen sharing this experience with us! Mom

August 14, 1994

[Mom] This past week we have enjoyed our visit with Steph and Linds and their children. We left Philmont Friday afternoon about 4:00 and drove to Denver to spend the night with Mark and Rita again and we had a wonderful visit. Daddy and Paul were so tired that they fell asleep on their sleeping bags but the rest of us stayed up until about 12:30 a.m. talking. It was very rewarding to have that kind of experience with them at this difficult time in their lives. They have a wonderful attitude and sweet spirit and are accepting of the Lord's will in this matter. Jessica has not shown a lot of improvement but they are full of hope and acceptance.



We left early Saturday morning for home. We arrived about five and began the job of unloading, washing clothes, mowing the lawn, and settling in. Stephani and Lindsay thought we would not arrive until about 10:30 so they scheduled to come later in the evening too. It was a joyous reunion! SaraKay and Katie (who've had their share of ups and downs) embraced and SaraKay kept saying, "I've missed you!"

Sunday morning we attended our own fast meeting so Stephani could see some of her ward friends again. The testimony meeting went overtime and we were really panicking about making it to Steve and Bonnie's ward in Idaho Falls in time for Rachel's blessing. One thing that added to the problem was that our van wouldn't start. We didn't have enough gas in the Cadillac to make the trip to Idaho Falls so we had to jump start the van and that took time, too. What a circus! We were ten minutes late to the meeting but luckily there were

several babies to be blessed and we made it in time (with about 1 minute to spare).

Steve gave Rachel a beautiful blessing and we felt so glad to be a part of it and have Steph and Linds there, too. Benson's hosted a lovely dinner that afternoon and we enjoyed renewing our friendship with them. When we got back to Blackfoot after the day's events, we relaxed, sat on the swing, visited, and enjoyed the beautiful evening. Monday was the day Linds was supposed to fly to San Jose to work for several days but circumstances changed and he stayed with us for the week. We kept very busy with four preschoolers, fixing meals, canning string beans, going to the temple, and helping with the Mother/Daughter night for Relief Society. It was so fun to have time to come to know Katie, Sam, and Joshua better. They are a delightful trio!

The boys were involved in a tournament, won the first night, but lost their second game. I

was sitting on the bleachers watching the game Wednesday night when someone walked up and asked me if I had heard about Gary. That was a good way to get my attention! I inquired and was told that he had fallen off the combine and broken his back. I hurried home to tell Daddy and we called Linda. He had indeed broken his back but fortunately there was no paralysis and surgery would not be required if he would lie still for two weeks and let it heal. Friday night we spent some time visiting with them and expressing our concern. This is a difficult time for him to be bedfast, but Garon was coming home for a few weeks and Ryan and their hired man were determined to keep the harvest going.

Dave and Andrea left Monday morning for Tempe. Andrea's parents trailed them for several hours to make sure that all went well. It proved to be a blessing since their car had some problems and they were delayed in Richfield for the night. At about five on Tuesday David called and said that they had finally arrived and were just getting ready to

unload the trailer. They had only been able to go about 35 mph and so the trip had been much longer than it should have been. We feel so grateful that they are safe and sound and have a lovely apartment and situation. David said that despite the many problems of the trip, they felt the Lord's sustaining influence to them in the decisions they made. One more bridge crossed! David also found out that he made it into the MBA program!

I failed to mention that Thursday morning Paul's teacher's quorum went on a super activity to the Grand Tetons. They hiked to Table Rock, water skied, toured Jackson Hole, floated the Snake, and had a great time. It worked out beautifully for Lindsay to spend Thursday with the boys because he had



wanted to hike to Table Rock and was glad for the company. Following the hike, Linds visited the Bennion Boy's Ranch and even had a chance to go horseback riding with two of his cousins. He spent a great deal of time at that ranch in his childhood and it still is a favorite spot!

We were glad that things worked out for him to go.

Paul and his group had a super time! But they wore themselves out and Paul is still dragging. We will be busy this week getting ready to leave for California next Saturday. School starts the 24th and Mike and Paul will be attending a leadership camp Tuesday at Ricks

College. Wish the kids didn't have to miss 3 days of school but it can't be avoided. I'm looking forward to the regimen and structure with school beginning but my thoughts also turn to you who are students; I know that it is very stressful for you once classes start.

August 28, 1994

[Mom] We arrived home last night about 5:30 and found all well here except for a garden overrun with weeds and a lawn that needed mowing. It felt wonderful to know that we had successfully completed our last trip and now could settle in and gear up for the fair and spud harvest. We felt like strangers today in our ward. A new family moved in and the YW presidency had been reorganized as well as other events that we missed in our absence. Last night the kid's friends started calling and before the evening was over (midnight) we had been briefed on the latest happenings in both the high school and junior high. Today reality is setting in and the kids are worrying about the



three days they have missed and the homework to get caught up. Hopefully things aren't as bad as they are imagining and they will be able to get right into the groove and carry on. The week before our trip was a marathon. The beans were ripe, all the lawns needed mowing before our departure, and Diane Belnap brought me some Utah tomatoes that needed canning. On Thursday SaraKay was lying on the floor in front of the fridge and Mike walked in and asked what was for lunch. I responded that unless SaraKay moved from in front of the fridge, nothing was for lunch. SaraKay raised her arm for some help up and Mike took hold of





her hand. I mentioned the possibility of injury with that kind of lifting and no sooner had I said it than SaraKay let out a cry and we knew we had a problem. She wouldn't move her arm and Mike thought that he had felt a pop when he went to lift her. A quick trip to the doctor confirmed that she had dislocated the ligaments that run from her wrist to her elbow and the doctor maneuvered them back into place, charged me \$80 and sent me on my way. We were grateful it wasn't any worse than it was.

We left here Saturday morning about 11:00 and arrived in St. George at 7:30. Grandpa and Grandma Richards fed us like kings while we were there. Grandma made two cakes, bought ice cream, served pop with every meal, and marinated and grilled pork chops for Sunday dinner. Daddy made the comment that we probably had eaten better at Grandma's than we would the whole rest of the trip! It was true although we did have some pretty fancy food in California!

The amusing thing that happened was that Grandma rented two movies that she thought would be fun for us. Her first selection, Nine

to Five, had enough profanity in it that Grandpa said he was going to have to have Grandma meet with the Bishop the next day! We tried to watch her second selection, Young Frankenstein, but it got so bad we eventually turned it off and advised Grandma to let one of us choose the videos next time around. I didn't tell her that we have had some pretty bad experiences ourselves choosing movies and ended up with some real duds! We appreciated their hospitality and we enjoyed visiting their ward with them on Sunday. It was fun for us all—even SaraKay had a great time.

We left Monday morning for Los Angeles and arrived about 1:30. I was a little apprehensive about the situation at the hotel. Brad Allen's wife loaned us a hot plate unit and suggested that we pack food for the week so the kids wouldn't

have to eat out every meal since the conference did not include the children on the meals. I had carefully packed boxes of canned soup, sloppy Joe, buns, plates, and fruit that we could eat when meals weren't provided. We had several food boxes, two coolers, two sleeping bags, as well as the usual luggage all crammed into and on top of our van.

By the time we arrived at the Hilton, the van and all of us looked like we had been through a war and my worst fears were realized when we drove up to the unloading area and bus boys were opening doors and unloading cars for the hotel guests. We quickly made the decision to leave most of our eating supplies in the car and retrieve them later ourselves.

I breathed a sigh of relief when we made it to our room on the 12th floor and no one stopped us in the lobby and asked, "What are those two sleeping bags for?" We quickly moved in and Dad and the boys went exploring, located the hospitality rooms, secured the conference supplies and gifts, located the pool,



Disneyland was quite close so we decided to walk. We hadn't got very far before we realized we'd made a mistake. It was much farther than we had anticipated and SaraKay was quickly getting tired of keeping up with two adults. One time she darted off the sidewalk and Daddy moved to accommodate her and stepped into a hole, twisted his ankle and fell. For a moment I had visions of ambulances, hospitals, sprained muscles, and me on my own the rest of the trip. Luckily it wasn't that bad but now we had a new problem--getting the rest of

and loaded our ice jug. The conference included youth and children activities during our banquets and seminars and so the boys and SaraKay always had a place to go while Daddy and I were busy. It was very nice because they stocked the kid's rooms with pop, chips, prunes, raisins, nuts, and other goodies and it took a lot of pressure off our own supplies. Monday and Tuesday evenings were nice banquets for Dad and me and SaraKay went to the kid's room Tuesday night because the boys were still at Knot's Berry Farm with the Allen children. They spent Tuesday at Knot's, Wednesday at Disneyland (9 a.m. to 12 a.m.) and Thursday at the beach.

Wednesday Dad and I and SaraKay left for Disneyland about 12:30 following his sessions. We missed the hotel shuttle but knew

the way with Daddy hobbling.

When we entered Disneyland from the street we realized that we still had a long way to go because we had a 100 acre parking lot stretching out ahead of us to traverse before getting to the main gate. Poor SaraKay was hot and tired and it put a damper on the entire experience for the three of us. We tried





to get her to go on all the kiddie rides (especially those with the smaller lines) but many of them were frightening to her and she resisted. All she really wanted to do was see Mickey Mouse and buy a Minnie Mouse hat so finally Daddy suggested that we do those two things and call it quits. It was so hot and the lines were so long that I didn't fight to stay longer either and we were back to the hotel by about 8 that evening. The kids didn't call it quits until midnight but we were all worn out and tired by the time the day ended.

Thursday at the beach was the highlight for me. We arrived about 11 and had to leave by three because of special entertainment that evening for the whole family. It was wonderful to just sit on the beach and watch the waves roll in and see the kids enjoying the ocean. All of us thoroughly enjoyed it and wished we had another day to share it with Daddy who missed the experience entirely. Thursday night was for the whole family. We loaded buses and went to Wild Bill's for supper. It was a four course meal with western entertainment including dancing, juggling, rope tricks, comedy, and chorus girls. It was a fun way to end the week. We returned to our hotel room and doctored everybody's sunburns before going to bed.

It took most of Friday morning for us to get all our paraphernalia sorted, packed, and loaded in the van. We left L.A. about 2:30 and hit a traffic jam that consumed about two hours worth of good travel time. I was glad to get out of California and hit the open roads of Nevada. We arrived at St. George about 10:30 to find supper waiting. Not wanting to disappoint Grandma, (of course) we greedily consumed the salad and casserole and headed to bed. Believe it

or not, (it never was like this when I was growing up) we were fed cereal and fruit and cake and ice cream for breakfast! We traveled home enjoying fresh grapes and tree ripened peaches from their back yard.

Despite the weedy garden and long grass, home looked wonderful! No traffic jams, smog, people expecting tips, and long lines. Hooray for Idaho!

[Dad] Traveling was relatively comfortable in the van. I drove most of the time and sometimes I was the only one awake. Our luggage rack was such a boon with the traveling we've done this summer. With a big can of peanuts, gummy bears, and other healthful munchies and Van Cliburn playing the World's Favorite Piano Music, I can make it a long ways.

A couple of the sessions I attended were particularly good and I want to share a little with you. One of the best sessions was the one with Don Aslett. He is an incredible entertainer while imparting good information. I am including a copy of a handout from his breakout session.

Another speaker was Hyrum Smith. He taught us the Shakespearian quote from "The Rape



of Lucretius” that he taught Randy’s graduating class. *“What win if I gain the thing I seek...”* An excellent phrase to think through whenever faced with tough decisions. Another speaker was Larry Chesley. He was born in Burley and was a Top Gun fighter pilot shot down over Vietnam. He spent seven years as a POW with a broken back and lost over 65 pounds during his captivity. He is LDS and an Eagle Scout and is currently serving in the Arizona State Legislature as a Senator. His remarks were very inspiring and gave us a lot of food for thought.

How grateful I am for the Church’s influence in the Scouting program. I had my feelings reinforced toward Scouting and its influence for good in the lives of young men. I’m proud to be a part of it! There are sure some wonderful professionals. Over 600 were

gathered at this conference for the Western Region, one of four regions of the BSA.

Gary is doing much better. He is in a back brace that limits his physical movements but is able to drive and do what he needs to keep things moving with his harvest. We are sure grateful that he is recovering so quickly. I talked to Mark last week and Jessica is slowly improving, also. She is gradually getting used to breathing through her mouth and nose instead of the tube in her throat.

She is also out of the coma per se, and is able to respond physically—such as pushing against things on command. It may yet be quite awhile until she fully recovers; things are uncertain. We saw a couple of accidents in our travels and feel blessed that we were able to return home without incident. The traffic, the smog, and the hordes of people sure make Idaho look good to us.

September 6, 1994

It’s fair time again and Daddy is running his annual “Tiger Ear Marathon.” I think the ordering of supplies was easier because of his experience last year but the problem of staffing the booth with three shifts a day, 24-30 people a shift, is always a challenge. The fair runs for 8 days so that adds up to a lot of willing help. Yesterday a shift came up 12



people short and Dad, Tim, and I made a hasty trip to the fair to lend a hand. Hopefully this week won't have too many of those kinds



of problems. Daddy usually goes in about 8:30 in the morning to make sure things are ready for the day, takes an eight hour shift working and supervising, and closes up at about midnight. It will be nice to have it over for another year. They are doing better this year than any previous year and almost sold \$8000 worth yesterday! I think they could double their profits if there was sufficient space to house the equipment necessary to cook the "ears". There are always long lines and a lot of people won't bother with a long line although they would buy if it didn't require such a long wait.

Saturday was the fair parade and Mike rode the student council float and Paul the Chambers. I got some good pictures. Tim decided not to go with me and opted to stay at a slumber party with friends and play ball instead. I invited my neighbor whose husband was hunting to go with me since Daddy was working in the booth and I didn't want to go alone. It was fun to visit and enjoy the parade together. It seems good to have the

regimen of school in our lives again. Paul and Mike both have very difficult classes this first trimester and I have been hoping that they haven't bit off more than they could chew. Paul and Tim started piano last week and that always adds more stress to all our lives.

I am trying to get ready for choir to begin this Sunday. The selection of music is a big concern and so time consuming but I think I have several numbers that we will enjoy. I am sending out letters this week to select individuals who I would like to recruit for the choir and I hope to increase our numbers. It is so fun to have a choir that can pick up a number and prepare it in a few weeks.

All my Merrie Miss girls are graduated now and so I teach them during Sunday School time and then I attend Relief Society. It has been fun to mingle with the sisters. Last week was our ward party and Delis Orr asked Mike and Paul to prepare a rap about our ward. We brainstormed on our California trip and came up with some cute rhymes that we put to "Mormon Rap" music. The ward loved it and the boys got lots of kudos.



My goal for this week is to help Daddy get through the fair and help Tim complete the paper work on his Eagle. Everything is completed; he just needs his board of review and he'll be done. Tim has been very persistent about it and determined to finish up. I've appreciated the hours he has already spent at the typewriter with forms and reports.

He and Paul will be attending the Order of the Arrow weekend next week in Island Park and they are looking forward to that. Daddy has to be at the camp that weekend for a follow-up Wood Badge get-together so he can provide the transportation for them. Paul will soon be 16. He is sorting through his many friends to decide who will be his first date. I have visited with most of you by phone this past week and it sounds like everyone is back in classes and hard at it. We are grateful that both sets of grandparents are healthy. It was fun to see Grandpa and Grandma Larsen riding in the parade.

I promised Mike I would get his housing app in the mail so I better get on that project. It doesn't seem possible that we are at that stage of the game with him.

[Dad] In Steve Covey's latest book he said, *"The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing."* That is a constant challenge; there are so many other things that impinge on our time and energies that sometimes seem more urgent and demanding. But I want each of you to know that for me the main thing is my family. I love and appreciate each of you and the influence you are in my life. In the priesthood lesson this week there was a quote from Elder Marvin J. Ashton: "Communication in the family will often be a sacrifice because we are expected to use our time, our means, our talent, and our patience to impart, share, and understand. Too often



we use communication periods as occasions to tell, dictate, plead or threaten. Nowhere in the broadest sense should communication in the family be used to impose, command, or embarrass."

As I reflect on the past I realize there have been times when I wasn't totally in harmony with the counsel from Elder Ashton. The perspective of age helps me be more patient and less demanding or commanding. Read Ephesians 4:29-32 for an indication of types of corrupt communication. I was interested to read the definitions of different types of anger. Wrath is deep indignation expressing itself in a desire to punish or get revenge. Malice is a deep-seated animosity that delights in causing others to suffer or in seeing them suffer. Anger is feelings of resentment or revengeful displeasure. Rage is a violent outburst of anger in which self-control is lost. Fury is a frenzied rage bordering on madness.

Elder Ashton concluded with some excellent guidelines for effective communication that we can all take to heart. "I pray our Heavenly Father will help us to communicate more effectively in the home through a willingness to sacrifice, a willingness to listen, a willingness to vocalize feelings, a willingness

to avoid judgment, a willingness to maintain confidences, and a willingness to practice patience." I see more and more how important effective and timely communication is. The more our lives are intertwined with others, the more critical it is that we be able to express ourselves, our desires, needs, and ambitions and then to be able to actively listen and observe so that we can insure that there are no tenuous assumptions and miscues in our verbal perambulations. The KISS principle should rule all our communications—Keep It Simple, Silly.

September 12, 1994

[Mom] I guess the big news of the week is that Daddy was sustained yesterday as the Young Men's president in the ward. He received the call a couple weeks ago and has been anxious for it to be official so he could get started. It is always scary to have a new calling and know the Lord's will in regards to the decisions you make in that position. I know Daddy will do a wonderful job. He has an amazing amount of knowledge about the program already with all his Blazer and scouting involvement over the last few years.

Last week was a busy one for him with the fair booth, but despite some absentees and a few

upsets, the booth made over \$50,000 and was a huge success. Saturday night ended with a bang....or nearly a bang. The crew that was working the night shift was busily selling to the long lines when policemen came running in and evacuated everyone in the grandstand, booths, and fairgrounds. Someone had called in a bomb threat and the police shut everything down in about 15 minutes. Although no bomb was found, they couldn't ignore that kind of a call and took action. Daddy is planning on going in tonight and finishing up the cleanup. I think he feels very satisfied with the week's activities.

I was able last week to help Tim finish up his last report on his Eagle. He has collected letters of recommendation in preparation for his Board of Review. What a relief to nearly have that completed. He goes this weekend for the Order of the Arrow ordeal. Paul is undecided about whether to go since it would consume most of the weekend and he hates to give up that much time.

Harvest begins in 10 days and Gary is planning to start close to that time. I am so grateful for the work for the kids. It looks like Tim will be doing odd jobs again this harvest since Gary is hesitant to hire a 13 year old but that is all right since lawns still need mowing

and Tim and Brody even have a worming job they are going to share during harvest. Last week as Tim was calling people to request letters of recommendation, I was sitting by him in my office listening to the calls. When he called Elaine Jones and asked





for a recommendation, she asked him what exactly she should mention in the letter. Without hesitation Tim replied, "Well, just try to write something really nice about me." Nothing like the direct approach!

One cute thing that SaraKay said the other day. She drew a picture of several stick figures and I asked her who they were. She said that it was our family. She then pointed to the picture and said, "This is you, this is Daddy, this is the boys, and this is sweetheart." (her) It's funny some of the things she comes up with.

When Steph and Linds were here this summer, Sam ran around the house saying, "BooBee" and then we would all laugh because he would get such a kick out of it. Linds told us not to encourage him but it got to be so funny that I couldn't keep from cracking up every time he would come around the corner in the kitchen and yell, "BooBee!"

The other day SaraKay and I laid down for a nap and as I was lying there I sensed that she was looking at me so I opened my eyes and she said with a big grin, "Boobee" and we both broke out laughing. Steph says Sam has

moved on to a new word now but we are still enjoying the old one.

I started choir yesterday and had a wonderful turnout. I got some good music that I think will be fun. This morning I called my two neighbors and invited them to aerobics and the three of us walked for an hour. It felt good to get back into it after a several month vacation. The weather has been especially pleasant this past week and hopefully we will have a beautiful fall.

Daddy and I spent some time last Friday looking at dining room sets. Several weeks ago a fellow ran into the back of the Cadillac at an intersection in Pocatello and the cost of repairing the car would be several hundred dollars. Daddy said the two little dents weren't bothering him and suggested we could use that money to get a dining room set. We saw several sturdy wood sets that we would refinish ourselves that would be considerably



cheaper than buying from a regular furniture store. We are still debating about doing something. I wish I felt more confident in my abilities to make these decisions.

We spent some time visiting with Grandpa and Grandma Larsen last night. Grandpa spent time at the fair in the Republican booth doing some campaigning for the upcoming election. We haven't heard any more news about Jessica but Trina's little girl, Megan, is pretty much holding her own. Gary is in a back brace but still able to do a lot. I think it is a miracle that he didn't suffer any paralysis and has had such a speedy recovery.

Grandma Richards called and said that Marlayne had another miscarriage. She and Kurt were in St. George visiting with Grandma and Grandpa Richards when it started. She went into the hospital and they discovered that the baby had been dead about 2 weeks. On their way back to Provo, Marlayne began having excruciating pain and began hemorrhaging. Kurt sensed the gravity of the situation and rushed her into the hospital at Nephi. She spent the night there and then the next day was able to continue on to Provo and get some medical help there. Maureen made a quick trip to be with her and returned home Saturday after the danger passed. They came close to losing her when she began hemorrhaging. We hope that she will be able to regain her strength



and get on her feet.

When I called Steve and Bonnie last week, Steve commented that they needed to call us once in a while; that their phone bill last month was for about \$3.00! He ought to frame that; it's surely a once in a lifetime event! But, what a blessing, since they, like the rest of you, are counting pennies and trying to live within their means. We are grateful for each of you children and for your dedication and hard work. We constantly pray for your wellbeing, your adherence to gospel principles, and for your health and strength to





President and Carroll have labored with this difficult situation. Last fast Sunday one little grandchild was confirmed a member of the church and all the grandchildren are coming each week with Grandpa and Grandma Bowman to church and participating in Primary. They love it and are having some involvement that they wouldn't have had otherwise. What a thrill to witness that even though it has been difficult their lives are



being influenced and blessed. I guess the important thing is to keep the faith, keep working, keep praying, and trust that in time "all things will work together for your good." I love the gospel. It brings such joy and peace. I rejoice to know that each of you has a testimony and is doing your part to push the work ahead.

[Dad] I can say "Amen" to everything your mother has said. It is indeed a relief to have the fair over

meet the day's challenges. We recognize the Lord's blessings in our lives and know He hears and answers prayers. I have thought about trials and how even in the worst of times, it is evident that the Lord is aware and supportive. I have also decided that no matter how bad things may appear...in time things work through.

A few months ago I became aware that Pres. Bowman's wayward son and his wife moved in with him and were staying there while they built a home. I could see the hardship that it was on Carroll because there were several small children and the family wasn't active in the Church. I've watched over the months as

and to have done so well at the Tiger Ear Booth. With it, popcorn sales, and grants I bring in more to the Council than I cost. Every day except one we set records. In fact, we have almost doubled the volume of the booth from \$27,000 in 1990 when the Scouts first took it over to \$52,000 this year. That is a lot of flour, sugar and oil that goes out over our counter! We used almost five tons of Ceretana flour in eight days. Yesterday we had the first staff meeting we've had for four months and it felt good to get us all together and make sure we are all on the same page. One of the subjects dealt with was Eagle Board of Reviews. There seems to be quite a

bit of adding to the requirements by some individuals and it causes a lot of problems.

I am excited but scared with my new calling. As I get older, I wonder if it gets harder to relate to the teenagers because of the differences in their world and the one I grew up in. We have been blessed with such good kids that as you go through your teens we delight in our relationships and friendships. It will be interesting for me to have both Mike and Paul in the Priests quorum in just a few more days. As I was reading this morning, I read this statement from Dr. Scott Peck: *"It would be a strange God who showered us with certainty, thereby relieving us from any need to exercise courage, initiative, and our capacity to figure things out for ourselves."* We really do yearn for certainty but think how much more we grow and become like God as we exercise our agency and our own initiative to determine the course He would have us pursue.

September 18, 1994

[Mom] Daddy and Tim are at a fireside, Paul and Mike are at Uncle Gary's being briefed on harvest, and SaraKay is listening to a story tape that she borrowed from the neighbors. We've had an interesting drama unfolding since Tuesday. I was downstairs doing some sewing and I came upstairs for a minute and looked out the bay window and what did I behold but a bright orange school bus parked on the far side of my garden. At first I thought that it had developed some mechanical problems and the driver had parked it there while she went for help, but then I remembered that Daddy made a bid on a bus to be used at the Salmon River High Adventure camp for BSA so I called Pocatello to inquire. I happened to get Daddy's boss and asked him if he knew anything about the bus in my garden and he said that he knew the scouts bought a bus but he didn't know why it was in my garden. When Daddy arrived home that evening, he admitted that the bus was no surprise to him. He offered to let the

scouts keep it in our pasture until next spring when they would take it to Salmon for the camp. I voiced a rather strong objection to the whole idea and so he found another home for it; it is still sitting there for now.



Several people have inquired as to when I started working as a bus driver; others have commented that it is nice to see we now have a vehicle large enough for our family. Mike asked if he could take the bus to school and give all his friends a ride. The list goes on and on. SaraKay invites everyone she sees to drop by and play in her new bus and tonight several people took her up on the offer and there was a group playing in it. I just happened to be visiting with Shauntel and Randy on the phone as I was looking out the window and all at once I noticed that the windshield wipers were going! I quickly said good-bye and headed out to the garden to beat on some kids. When I got to the bus the kids were all blaming each other for turning everything on. I shooed them all out of the bus and sat down to try to turn off the heater, fans, defrost, wipers, and whatever other

buttons had been pushed. Needless-to say, the bus has got to go!

Another bit of good news is that the old clunker piano is back! You remember the song, "The Cat Came Back"? Well, we have our own version called "The Piano Came Back" and Daddy is not very happy about having to move it one more time! I am happy to have it returned because there are a lot of mornings when Paul and Tim can't quite get their practicing done on one piano.

I mentioned last week that we were thinking about getting a dining room set. Well, we made a major purchase this past week and it was not a table but a pressure tank. Tuesday night as we went to bed Daddy mentioned that he was worried about our pump. He noticed that every time someone turned on the water that the pump went on and he said that it shouldn't be turning on that often. We called a fellow who works on systems and he came over and confirmed that our pressure tank had given up the ghost. If we didn't replace it the gears on the pump for our culinary well would soon wear out and we would have to replace it, too. Within 24 hours he had a new tank and we had the problem taken care of.

A few weeks ago I was thinking about David riding his bike to school every day and wondered if he was wearing a helmet. Knowing what traffic is like in a college town and how dangerously close cars come to bikers, I have felt some concern. Last night as I talked with David, I asked him about a helmet and he commented that he had been going to get one. He then shared with me that he had been hit by a pickup in a crosswalk a few days ago and

needed to get the back tire of his bike straightened. I hope that he will record for posterity the event because as he told me about it I couldn't help but feel that he had been protected from what could have been a devastating accident. He said he had the sensation of being pushed along by the front of the pickup (broad-sided) but he never tipped over and he was not cut or bruised by the impact. He commented that he felt nothing but he knew he had been hit and remembered looking up over the hood of the pickup into the face of a very frightened driver. David was late for class and continued riding and didn't realize until later that his bike was messed up enough that it would require some work. Thank goodness he is alright.

Report on Jessica; Mark and Rita brought her home for two several hour visits. She laughs, kisses them, and seems to realize that she is home. She is in a wheelchair part of the day. She continues to progress.

Tim's Gerbil climbed out of its cage last night and we couldn't find it this morning so I have been stepping lightly and hoping to not come across it at some spooky moment. I guess if I do, I can always call for SaraKay to come rescue me....or it.



[Dad] This past week has really gone quickly. There was a little wrap up of the Tiger Ear booth and getting rid of the leftover flour and a cleanup session. Wednesday night, I helped cook Dutch oven cobbler for everyone attending roundtable. When I brought some leftover cobbler home, Tim tried it. He said, "This is GOOD! And I don't even like cherries." Friday I took Tim and a couple other boys from our troop to Island Park Scout Camp for their Order of the Arrow ordeal. It was interesting to be able to help with that. Saturday was my Wood Badge 90 day reunion at the same location. It was good to see all the friends from that experience again as we had an overview of the leadership skills taught during the course and briefly touched base with our squads to see how they were coming on their tickets.

I've given quite a bit of thought to my new calling as Young Men's President. We had a great activity Tuesday night as we went to Dan Acevedo's law office and reviewed with him what it takes to become a lawyer and what their work is like. The boys gained valuable insight into the costs and effort required to get trained and licensed as a lawyer. It helped remove some of the glamour of L.A. Law and John Grisham novels.

My staff is complete with the addition of Troy Goodwin as secretary. (He said he was in the same ward as Randy and Shauntel in Provo.)

Last night we had a great fireside with Colonel Jack Layton, a test pilot of SR-71 Blackbirds and A-12's. He told some interesting stories and had some video clips that held the attention of the youth. He had a video clip of one that caught fire and he had to eject from it because of losing control when the hydraulics went out. He and his wife are temple workers in Idaho Falls now and they were really complimentary of our young people and their appearance and respect. I am excited about the prospects of being able to make a difference in the lives of the young men in our ward and hope to be able to give good spiritual direction. Dad

September 26, 1994

[Mom] Last week was full of good times and bad. As some of you are aware, Shan Clements was riding on a four wheeler and was hit by a spud truck. He had severe brain damage and had part of one leg amputated. His grieving family spent the week at his bedside and finally made the decision to have the machines disconnected. Within a few hours, he died. It has been a sad week for everyone as we have empathized with his parents and with his wife, Tiffany. Things like this are so hard to understand. I guess we have to have faith that the Lord will strengthen people to meet the challenges they face and that comfort and understanding will come. It seems like every harvest there is

at least one bad accident and it makes me nervous about the kids, the long hours, and the potential for problems.

Uncle Gary called last Friday morning and asked if Tim could substitute for someone



who got sick. Tim was delighted! Now everyone has been promoted; Mike runs the sand machine, Paul helps with the conveyors and Tim runs the piler. The Pretl boys are also working and it is a nice arrangement for all. We are going out tonight to get some spuds. Wish there was some way to get some of these good Russet potatoes to each of you! They are such a treat and really help stretch your food dollar.



I have missed having Tim around the last few days; now it is just SaraKay and me. Daddy has been gone long hours, too, and that makes the days go on forever. Last Saturday he left at 5 a.m. to go to Logan for a scout training session. Friday night he and I had a date and went to Ricks College for an Afterglow Homecoming Concert. It was nice. We called and arranged to take some food to Julianne and spend some time with her. She is having a wonderful experience and seemed glad to see us. She was very complimentary about what a good experience Christian had with us last summer and said that he came home a better boy.

We tried to get together with Kathy, Coco, and Jimmy but it was also Madison's Homecoming and they were involved there. Staff is still in California working and Kathy takes all the calls for the business and schedules Staff's work. Hopefully they will be able to get their business sold and be together as a family soon.

We visited with Grandpa and AlvaLu last night. Grandpa called Mark and got an update on Jessica. She continues to improve although it is slow. What a vigil they have kept the last three months! We received news from Gary that they are having a wedding on December 15th. Garon and Alison worked in harvest with the boys last week and it was fun for them to get acquainted. She is from Alpine, Utah.

There is also going to be a wedding in Nate and Maureen's family—Chelsea on December 29th in the Portland Temple. That makes four weddings in two years for them!

Yesterday was especially rewarding for us as we had Paul ordained a Priest and Tim passed his Board of Review for his Eagle award. Daddy says he is going to enjoy having two sons in his priest quorum and they have commented how much they are enjoying his lessons. Tim looked especially handsome in his scout uniform including the scout pants and socks that he purchased for Cedar Badge. At a Court of Honor Tuesday night he received five more merit badges bringing the total to 31. He enjoys the opportunities he has because of Daddy's job in scouting.

Knowing that I would be involved with Tim's Board of Review Sunday evening, I went to the Woman's Conference on Saturday night in the other stake. It was so beautiful! I'm grateful for the conditions that I live in, for my beautiful family, for health and strength, and for Daddy's good job that has brought such contentment and security, and for the bounties of the season. Watching the Clement family struggle through their ordeal this week has made me realize again how precious life is and how much we should relish each day and the associations we share.



know he will miss her. Thank goodness for the teachings of the gospel!

Well, I better go. I'm still working on getting all my windows washed and I am nearly half through. I do three a day. Nothing lifts my spirits like clean windows! P.S. My next project is

One of Shan Clement's brothers-in-law lives in our ward and he shared his testimony in meeting yesterday. He referred to the drought that we are experiencing in this area and said that if we could capture all the tears that have been shed this week for Shan that it would probably fill a reservoir. That was a touching thought and reminded me of the "refiner's fire" and the role of adversity in our lives.

I failed to mention that Randy's brother, Spencer, was involved this past week in a roll-over in Wolverine and the other boy in the car who was driving was ejected and killed while Spencer miraculously walked away. It has been such an emotional week for the people in Blackfoot involved in that drama.

Stephani mentioned that Lindsay's Grandmother Bennion passed away Saturday. She had a little girl who passed away in her childhood and also she was orphaned very young herself and doesn't remember her own parents so I am sure a glorious reunion is taking place for her. We extend to Lindsay our sympathy and love. I know how close he has been to his grandparents over the years and

going through all my files and sorting out all the information that belongs to each member of the family. I would like to mail you each a packet of your mementos if you promise to keep it safe and get it put into some sort of scrapbook. This is the first step in my "Get Going on Genealogy Project".

October 3, 1994

[Mom] It's rainy and cold today and the harvest is still waiting to be completed. We had such beautiful weather the first few days with temperatures in the 60's and 70's and things really moved ahead. Last Thursday a storm moved in and it has continued to rain and drizzle enough to keep the fields too wet to work. About four o'clock on Thursday my crew arrived home and the first word Tim said was, "Party!" It was okay for a day or two, but to awaken this morning to bleak skies and more rain was too much for us all. It has also turned off cold and the forecast is for more cold and maybe snow. It is frustrating to have these kids home killing time and know that once school starts they will have to miss school to finish up. Everyone is in the same



boat, though, so maybe they will give them a couple more days.

Last weekend was very rewarding. We've had several projects we've wanted to complete before winter sets in. One of these was to thoroughly clean the garage including sorting through all the stuff that has been stored in the rafters. It has been a long time since Daddy's had a Saturday free but he and Tim spent the day in the garage listening to Conference on the radio and organizing. We all watched the solemn assembly on TV for the first half hour and then we listened as we worked.

Mike and Paul got to go to Provo with friends



for the weekend and they left at nine

Saturday morning. They arranged with Steve and Bonnie to go to the Priesthood session with Steve and spend the night with them. They intended to attend conference in the tabernacle but we weren't sure if they would make all their connections so we just sent them off and hoped they'd have a fun weekend. Saturday night Tim and Daddy went to the priesthood session and then we hosted the priest quorum for ice cream afterwards. We thoroughly enjoyed each and every talk and thrilled to hear that our BYU Bishop, Ed Pinegar's, wife was sustained as the new General Primary President. Steve and David, did you recognize her and remember her from the MTC? She is a lovely and very capable lady.

Sunday morning we watched the morning session as a family. During the rest song we watched carefully to see if we saw Paul and Mike and were shocked when we did spot them and their two friends in the balcony! What a sweet surprise to see that they made it and were there in the tabernacle for the morning session. Only when they returned at about four did we find out what they'd been through to get a seat. Steve went to work at the hospital after the session Saturday night and they told him to awaken them when he got home at 2 a.m. They got up at two and arrived at temple square about three and

stood in line for 6 hours waiting to be seated! They said the line snaked clear around the block by the time they arrived and that several people pitched tents and slept in sleeping bags to ensure a seat for conference! By the time they finally did get to their seats, they were so tired that they could hardly stay awake for the session and Brandon, Mike's friend who was with them, said they were a very reverent bunch with bowed heads most of the session. Mike commented that he didn't want to be caught napping so every time the camera looked like it was coming his way, he tried to perk up but for the most part,

way, he tried to perk up but for the most part,



they were bombed and dozy for the morning. Thanks to Steve and Bonnie for putting up with them and their friends and helping them make connections.

Last night I continued with my genealogy project and sorted through several years of mementos; today we are working on scrapbooks. Everything that I am finding for you older children, I'll keep and then when you come to visit, we will decide what to do. Daddy and I are cleaning out our file cabinets and organizing all our family histories and genealogy books. Could each of you send me the following information: your name, spouses complete name and parents names, baptism dates, endowment date, marriage date, children's complete names and birth dates, and blessing dates for everyone. I want to get our immediate family entered in the computer with all of these dates checked and verified. When Grandma Richards asked me for information on some of you, I was amazed to find out that my records are very incomplete. I found birth certificates for some of you and other information and I want to get these documents transferred to you so that you will have them when you need them. Make sure that names are spelled correctly and complete. I do not need the dates on spouse's parents but I do need complete names. Shauntel asked a while ago about the possibility of me writing up some

remembrances that I have of her in her early years. That is a worthy project and I hope over the next months to write similar information for each of you children so you can have that to use in your own life stories whenever you undertake that project. As I get into this more, I would like for each of you to purchase some sort of file box and then as I receive information that has to do with you, I will get it to you and you can file it away for future reference. Grandma Richards has her Johnson line and

Grandpa has some of his line on disks and we are going to see that this information is passed on to you as we receive it.

[Dad] Last week, your mother and I went to the temple with Bishop and Bonnie Moon. Afterwards we went to eat at the Sizzler in Idaho Falls. After spending that much time with Bishop Moon, he finally got us sold on the idea of going "sugar free". So starting on Wednesday, we have tried to avoid eating any sweets or sugars (with a few calculated exceptions). I am reminded of the quote, *"Character is the ability to carry out a worthy decision after the emotion of making that decision has passed."* So, I guess we will see what kind of character we have. It is incredible how much of our lives revolve around sugar to sweeten it up.

I, too, thrilled with the messages of the General Authorities and the spirit of conference. For home evening we discussed what we liked most about conference. Sara Kay liked the Primary children singing Saturday afternoon and Tim liked the Priesthood session with his Dad. One of my favorite talks was L. Aldin Porter's. Having known him so long in the insurance business, it was a thrill to hear him speak with so much authority and eloquence. It is a source of comfort to have the assurance that the

Brethren as a body will never lead us astray. Well, I am going to sign off for now. I leave early in the morning to go to Salt Lake. I will be taking some potatoes down to Aunt Kathy, taking Butch Morgan to the VA hospital, and going to a one day seminar on grant writing taught by a fellow from National BSA and sponsored by the Great Salt Lake Council. It will be taught at their Camp Tracy and I am excited to go there for the first time. In closing, let me share with you another quotation. *"A successful parent is willing to do that which the unsuccessful parent is not willing to do."* A successful missionary is willing to do that which the unsuccessful missionary is not willing to do. Are you willing to pay the price for success? Love, DAD

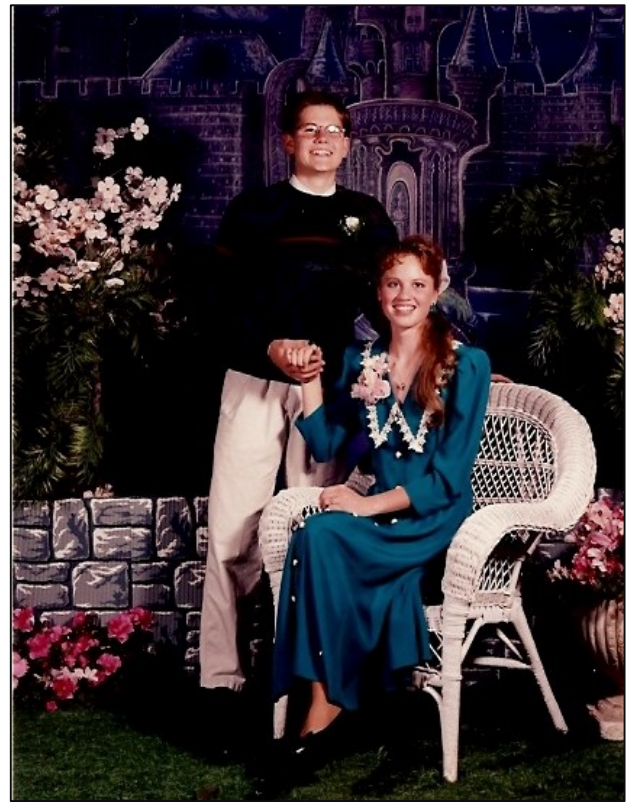
October 9, 1994

[Mom] Daddy is in the living room holding his first official Young Men's officers meeting tonight and I am trying to keep the rest of the house relatively quiet to accommodate him. He has been very excited about his new church calling and the people that he is working with. I think he brings a lot of knowhow and experience to the position and that he will be a real asset. It was nice today to have Paul and Mike both at the sacrament table and Tim passing. That is going to be one of the things I miss when all of the children are gone. It is such a thrill to see my sons at the sacrament table!

Harvest vacation was officially over last Wednesday but because of all the rain they extended it and then decided to cancel the extension because it wouldn't quit raining and all the kids weren't able to work anyway. I was grateful they called school back in session because every day the kids were out and unemployed, they were thinking up new ways to have fun and it was just one continuous party. I finally told the boys that we were going to be productive and we got out the scrap books and photo albums and finished up all the books for Mike, Paul, Tim, SaraKay and me. It felt good to have all of that memorabilia

put away and organized and know we didn't have to face it again for a while.

Uncle Gary called tonight and asked if the boys could miss school tomorrow and help him finish up now that things have dried up a little. I know we need to do what we can to help him since he has been so good to hire the boys and work with us. Hopefully there will be enough other kids out that the teachers won't move things along too fast for a few days.



We've had another tragedy in the community; a boy, 15, killed himself Friday. It was the son of the Home Economics teacher, Mrs. Hernandez. He was a twin and was struggling with feelings of inferiority towards his twin. What a sad thing! It reaffirms to me the importance of each person reaching out to those around them and building and lifting in

all our conversations and associations.



I'm in the process of making curtains for the dining-kitchen area. I have the fabric and lace and only lack the time but I am hoping this week will open up a little and I can get it done.

Last Saturday was too wet for harvest and so we got some work done on our woodpile. Randy Cox brought a load of pallet scraps and Daddy, Mike, and Paul spent several hours on that project. Tim and his friend, Shane Jenks, spent Saturday mowing six lawns that had been waiting during harvest. I was chief driver for the day and so I didn't get much else accomplished. Tim was so tired by nightfall that he fell fast asleep during the BYU/Fresno game and missed most of it. Sunday morning I tried to give him a play by play account of the last seven minutes and eventual win. It was funny for me to be doing that; usually he is the one filling me in.

Mike and Paul both have dates this week for homecoming and are excited about that. They

hate to miss part of the activities of the week with working in harvest.

Daddy and I were "missionarying" Saturday night. We have some new nonmember neighbors who bought Bud Hansen's house and we invited them to go to the "Annie Get Your Gun" at the Nuart, starring our other neighbor, Ron Mangum, who we are also trying to activate. It was a fun evening and we felt good about it. I am inviting Monica to Relief Society Thursday and hopefully I can introduce her to the church.

[Mom] Today has been one of those days you wish wouldn't have happened. This morning Paul and Mike left early to go to the school and get their assignments and talk to their teachers about missing a few days. I decided to go to the church to aerobics but when I got there the church was locked up. A group of ladies who walk every day were there and I mentioned that my aerobics group must not be in session yet and they told me that our leader, Candice Clegg, had been diagnosed with cancer and was having a mastectomy this morning. What sad news!

When I got home I noticed that the Davis's



cow was out and roaming around the barnyard. Melanie called and asked my opinion and I said that as long as the cow's calf was still in the pasture, the cow probably wouldn't go far. We decided to keep an eye on things and the Davis's would be able to handle it when they got home.

About 10:30 I sat down to organize my day and noticed a note in my day-timer about a dentist appointment at 11:00. I grabbed SaraKay and we made a quick trip to town to the dentist. When I returned home, I was met by the cow standing by the garage. Our arrival scared her and she ran off, leaving a trail



behind her. I wondered if I could open the side gate and shoo her in so I tried but her calf wouldn't stay away from the gate long enough for me to get the mother in.

Next thing I knew the cow was running down the road towards Barrett's. I decided to call Andy Davis at the high school and tell him to come home and retrieve his cow. By the time he arrived, she was back in our yard so I suggested to Andy that he shoo her around the house and I would keep her from going past me and she could go through the gate. Good plan. As she came around the house and saw me standing by the woodpile (heavily

armed with two big pieces of pallets to protect myself) she took off and ran straight through the fence, knocking down the fence like it was made of toothpicks. Between Andy and me we managed to get the fence tied back together enough to secure it for a while and I returned to my lunch.

When Tim got home we hurried out to the farm to take him to work only to find that the sand machine had been broken all day and they hadn't unloaded a single truck yet! The kids might as well have gone to school. Frustrating! I visited a few minutes with Linda who was out helping and soon Gary arrived

with the part. I left but have spent most of the evening worrying about the boys, the cold, and the problem of missing another day of school. Linda thought they might work until midnight tonight to make up for the day's delay. I'll be glad to get harvest over.

[Dad] Last Tuesday I had the opportunity of going to Salt Lake for a grant writing seminar. I drove the Council pickup, taking several bags of potatoes, picked up Butch Morgan and Rudey Ballard and left Blackfoot for Salt Lake at 6:00 a.m. We dropped the potatoes off at Kathy's

work place on South Temple, dropped Butch off at the VA hospital, and Rudy and I drove to Camp Tracy up little Cottonwood Canyon to the Training Center. The presenter did an excellent job—giving me some ideas and facts about what trustees are looking for in a grant request that should help me in future grant requests. The food was excellent, the scenery beautiful in that idyllic setting, and we were on our way back home by 2:30. We had to retrace our steps and pick up Butch, stop at Smith & Edwards, and head for home.

Thursday, I had an interim review of my Critical Achievements. Some were up to par,

some were not, and some were “far exceeds.” That is an interesting process that I hadn’t experienced when self-employed. I did a semblance of the process as I reviewed the past year and set goals. But there is a difference when you are working for someone else and have to measure up to their expectations to justify your paycheck. As a whole I feel secure and happy in my position with the Scouts and feel like I am doing what I was hired to do. I feel that Brad is comfortable with what I am doing and appreciates having me on the staff.

Sometimes it is easy to get impatient and feel that the money isn’t coming in fast enough, but much of this job is cultivating relationships and working with people so that they are aware of Scouting as they do their planning with wills and trusts.

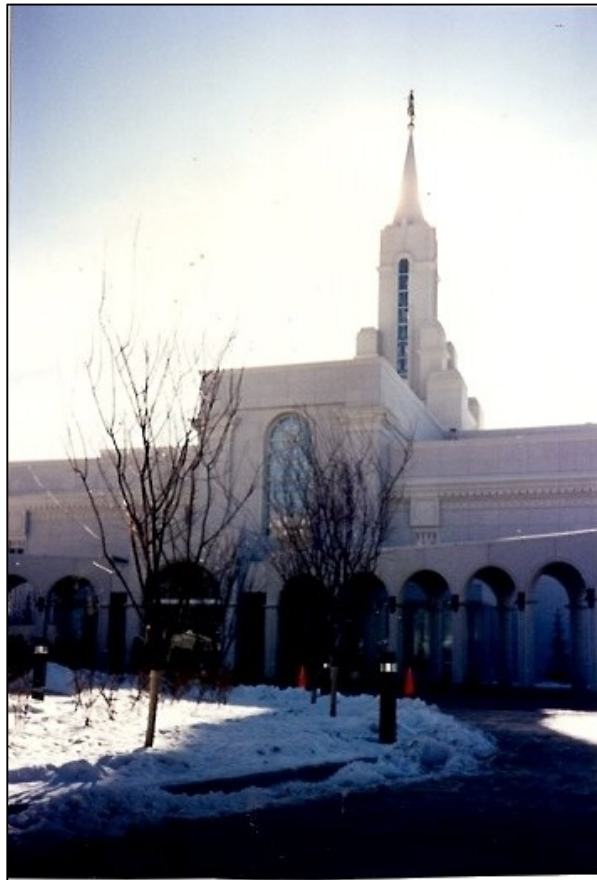
I’m excited when I am working on projects that require my creative juices to flow. That is probably why I am enjoying my new calling in the Young Men so much. It is a challenge to pull together a team to accomplish the work we must do with the youth—teaching and training them, challenging them, and helping them to cope with the trials and temptations of this time in the history of the world.

Today was really quiet at the office because most of the other guys were at Treasure Mountain finishing off the commissary. I didn’t go because I was supposed to make a presentation at the Life Underwriter’s Association in Pocatello regarding uses of Life Insurance in Charitable Giving. However, I was

preempted by another program and they forgot to inform me. Part of the day I felt sick, with an upset stomach and headache. It has been so long since I have felt ill; I hardly knew how to cope.

I would like to share a final thought with you before I sign off. “Luck is seldom the fickle lady she is often pictured as being. She is more apt to bestow her favors on the deserving than the undeserving. She is especially apt to smile on a man who has

developed a consuming interest in his work. Alexander Graham Bell’s wife was practically deaf. For months he worked passionately to invent a workable hearing aid for her. Just as it seemed he failed, his work led to the discovery of the principles for the telephone. Luck had smiled—but on a very deserving man!” The harder you work the luckier you are! That is why you are all enjoying such success in your school, work, and missionary labors. The law of the harvest is immutable. There is a law irrevocably



decreed in heaven and when we receive any blessing it is by obedience to that law, not a matter of luck. That is why I would replace luck with blessed. DAD

[Dad] Well, tonight was the last night of harvest. We are so thankful that the boys don’t have to miss any more school or go out anymore after school. It is just too hard on their mother! It was quite gratifying for me to be able to go out a couple days last week with Dad and help Gary. We have come a long way



in mending fences and strengthening our relationship. As I get older, the relationships with my brothers and sisters and parents become more important to me. I am grateful to have such basically good siblings.

Saturday night Sue and I finally had a couple of hours together to watch Jurassic Park. It was quite interesting, but I liked the book better. Tonight we also got started on Mike's scholarship applications. I had some other work that I was doing and we kept both computers busy and the printer humming.

We have been grateful for our wood burning stove lately. It has turned quite cold and has even snowed some places in the valley. I always enjoy looking at the mountains around us and seeing them covered with snow.

I am enjoying the challenges of my new Church calling. It is rewarding to have Mike and Paul in the Priests Quorum together. We are having a planning meeting tomorrow night and working things out for the coming year. We are also looking forward to a baptismal excursion on the Saturday after Thanksgiving. We are scheduled at the temple at 5:00 a.m.

We will probably have Tim's Eagle Court that night. In December we have tickets to the Bountiful Temple open house.

October 16, 1994

We were touched as we read the log of E-mail updates regarding Jessica that Mark included in last month's letter. I don't think any of us can realize what a vigil this experience has been nor the quiet faith and love and perseverance required on the part of Mark and Rita and their family. We wept and renewed the dedication of our prayers and fasting to Jessica's recovery and the sustaining influence of the Spirit to buoy up her family.

Harvest has been prolonged because of rain. It has been a real blessing for Mike, Paul, and Tim to be able to work for Gary. I think they have drawn much closer to his family because of the shared experiences of the harvest. They had missed all the school they could afford to so last Thursday and Friday I went out along with Dad to take their places. Dad ran the piler and I had a crash course on the sand machine and ran it. It was such a wonderful feeling to be working with Dad and Gary again together in a harvest. It was also interesting to watch Dad become obsessed with a truck that had a problem with the drive mechanism and not leave it alone until we had dismantled it and put it back in running condition without shoveling off the load by hand as the manufacturer said we would. I was reminded again of Dad's creative abilities in solving problems and tenacity in sticking to it until the job was done.

I would just like to briefly report on each of the kids. Steph & Linds were able to attend BYU's game yesterday with Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana. Katie is in kindergarten, Sam is still obsessed with dinosaurs, and Joshua is zipping around the house in his little walker. Shauntel and Randy are making their mark in Iowa. Randy is doing well in medical school and Shaunnie enjoys and is challenged

by her work as a school psychologist. Steve & Bonnie are still in Provo—he is working at the hospital and pursuing his Masters of Accountancy. Rachel is now three times her birth weight of 4 ½ lbs. four months ago. Dave and Andrea are in Tempe, AZ where he is working on a dual Masters in Business Administration and Health Administration. She is looking for flute students and taking care of Laurel Ann who just had her first birthday.

Becky is down to 4 ½ months left of her mission in Oklahoma. She has really been blessed with much success and growth. John has just been called as mission secretary in Taiwan. We have had glowing reports of his abilities with the language and proselyting. Mike is involved in applying for scholarships and housing at the Y. He wants to spend a semester there with Becky and John before he goes on his mission. Paul is doing well with his schooling and especially learning to love the piano. I was just called as the Young Men's president and it is rewarding to have both of them in the Priests quorum. Tim has had his Eagle Board of Review and we are planning to have his Court of Honor Thanksgiving weekend; you are all invited.

My work has been interesting lately. The Tiger Ear Booth at the Fair is one of my big responsibilities. It was very successful this year and generated \$40,000 for camp improvements. A few weeks ago, I had the opportunity of riding around 1,600 acres in Wolverine Canyon that someone is interested in giving to the Council. Being on horseback brought back a lot of memories of my youth and growing up on Grandpa's farm. Sure love each of you and cherish you more as I get older—big 51 this year!

October 16, 1994

[Mom] Tonight we were sitting in the living room scheduling the coming week. I suggested that for home evening tomorrow we go to North's Chuck Wagon for a "harvest

dinner" celebration and then to the mall so I could help the boys spend their money! Just as we were finalizing plans for this wonderful evening out, the phone rang and Gary asked if the boys could come out after school and help him get out the last 6 truckloads. There was silence for a momentand then consensus that they would go out one more time! I thought we were all through Saturday and I washed up all the harvest clothes, cleaned the garage, and gotten rid of the muddy boots and now we had it to face again. After missing three days last week, the boys went back to school but continued working after school and nights until eleven.

Daddy and Grandpa Larsen both spent Thursday and Friday helping and rains and cold weather shut everything down by Friday night in time for the Homecoming activities. I took SaraKay to the Homecoming parade earlier that day and stood under an umbrella in the pouring rain to see the procession of drenched floats and kids. Paul drove the Chambers float which consisted of our green Toyota and Chambers members and a few dripping wet signs hanging from the sides. Quite a sight!

The game that night was played in the rain but our school won the District Championship and will now go on to state for the fourth straight year. Mike and Paul both had dates to the Homecoming Dance Saturday night. Mike's group ate at Nathan Hill's and then came here after the dance for goodies and then back to the dance to clean up since it was sponsored by the Chambers.

Paul's group went in for dinner at Layne Van Orden's office building where they had set up and decorated an area, then to the dance, and then back to the office for video games and popcorn. Both groups seemed to have a great time. Paul borrowed a trench coat that he found in a basement closet (I think it is Steve's) and looked so grown up as he headed out the door with corsage in hand, fancy duds, and drove off in Daddy's Cadillac! I got choked up seeing Paul look so spiffy and



Daddy got choked up just thinking about what might happen to his Cadillac. Paul forgot his CD's and popcorn and came back after he picked up his date to get them and admitted that when he left here he headed out to the farm and was part way down the road before he realized that he wasn't going to Gary's farm this time but in the opposite direction to get Cami. I just hoped he knew his way to Blackfoot and didn't get lost before the night was over.

Daddy and I decided to borrow "Jurassic Park" from the neighbors. Tim watched it with us and warned us of upcoming scary parts so we got along fine. The special effects were truly amazing but I still like "Fiddler on the Roof" better and prefer shows that entertain rather than terrify. We spent a wonderful, rainy and cold Saturday indoors watching BYU beat Notre Dame. We received a letter from Steph and Linds that same day telling us that they were going to the game and we looked every time they showed the fans to see if we could spot them but to no avail. But, just knowing they were there gave us a real thrill.

Following the game I received a phone call from the mother of John's missionary companion, Kyle Bradford. She was calling from Virginia in regards to a letter her son had written saying that John was a relative and maybe his family would have some genealogy that they could get from us. Sister Bradford was so pleasant and nice and read some excerpts from Kyle's letter about how much he thought about John and what a wonderful missionary he was. I thought it was very thoughtful of her to call and share those sweet things with us.

Friday was Laurel Ann's birthday and Andrea said that they had a special day complete with a visit from a dear friend of hers that was passing through the area. I spent part of Laurel's birthday thinking about how grateful I was that Andrea and David did not have to turn the clock back and relive that difficult day and night prior to Laurel's birth.

My big project for the week was getting the curtains made for my kitchen and dining area. I had purchased some fabric a couple weeks ago and then found some matching lace but I was having such a hard time because I just wasn't sure of what I was doing. Monday morning my neighbor, Melanie, asked me how I was coming with my curtains and I had to admit that I was at a standstill. She asked to see my fabric and immediately told me what I needed to do and how to line them and how to get the lace to hang just so and answered all my questions. It was an answer to a prayer that hadn't even been offered yet and I moved ahead and within four days, I had some really cute new curtains that add so much to my rooms. I was delighted with how they turned out and to think that I had done it myself (with help from the Lord and Melanie).

This week is the beginning of filling out scholarships for Mike. He has taken from a computer program at school all the available scholarships and printed out a list for me and I am starting to request apps and fill out forms. Hopefully we can get some money lined up for him. He has his 18th birthday

Wednesday and has housing confirmed for fall in Heritage Halls.



[Dad] I am enjoying my new church job. I really do love and enjoy my Priests and feel so blest to have such a great group of young men. We had a planning night here last Tuesday. Sue made cinnamon rolls, I bought cider and we had a great time. I had them do a Desert Survival Test where they are the survivors of a plane crash in the Mojave Desert and they have a list of 15 things that were salvaged from the plane before it burned. They individually prioritized the list and then as a group. It is a learning exercise in group dynamics and helped to prepare for the give and take involved in setting up a three month calendar.

Last week we received a \$1,000 check from a couple in Jackson that I met last winter. When I called to talk with them about whose name should go on the James E. West Fellowship certificate, they asked what was necessary for them both to be recognized and volunteered to send another check. The lady also asked me how people were supporting our endowment efforts and said she had said a prayer for me after our meeting last winter. I was touched to realize their concern for Scouting and faith that God could help.

Last Sunday night at our youth fireside, Bishop and Sister Godfrey spoke and did an outstanding job. One of the quotes they shared with us was from Elder Ashton: *"Perhaps the greatest charity comes when we are kind to each other, when we don't judge or categorize someone else, when we simply give each other the benefit of the doubt or remain quiet. Charity is accepting someone's differences, weaknesses, and shortcomings; having patience with someone who has let us down; or resisting the impulse to become offended when someone doesn't handle something the way we might have hoped. Charity is refusing to take advantage of another's weaknesses and being willing to forgive someone who has hurt us. Charity is expecting the best of each other."* What a





What a trial by fire! They need our continued prayers.

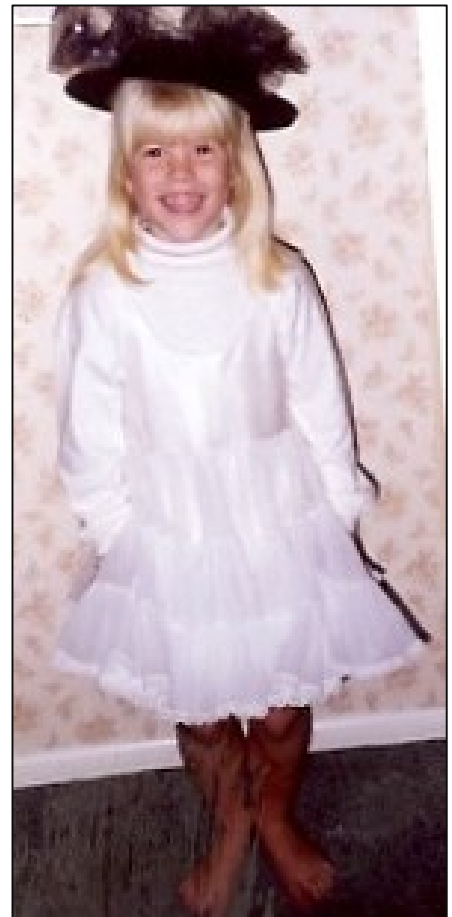
Mark said that to this point the insurances have picked up the bill and it has not been exhausting financially for them. He wanted to continue with his mission contribution and said he would keep touch when insurances ran out and things get tight. It is certainly sweet of him and Rita to be helping us despite their

beautiful description of charity! What a great challenge for each of us to measure up to. I have found that when you expect the best you are seldom disappointed. DAD

[Mom] Daddy spent some time this morning on the phone with Uncle Mark. We have been receiving \$40 a month from him for Becky and John's mission expenses and we have been concerned that with all the medical expenses they have incurred with Jessica that they not continue helping us. It was a timely call. This past week was a real emotional roller coaster for the family. Jessica has been progressing steadily and they did surgery last week and removed the tube that has been in her throat. She is able to make some sounds and to get up and walk to the bathroom and be less an invalid now. They were all very encouraged and hope to bring her home for Thanksgiving. I don't know the day, but just shortly after her surgery she had a seizure. This was the first time and very unexpected. After it such a look of dismay and terror in her face that Mark and Rita stayed at her bedside all the next day. She appeared to be crying and made whimpering sounds. Mark gave her a blessing and she finally settled down and slept. They have kept her medicated. It was a real setback for her and very discouraging.

problems. We have received beautiful letters from Becky and John lately and feel like they are both doing some wonderful things on their missions. Of course, that is how I feel about each of you and your labors.

I remember the time when we were living in Sandy, Utah and Daddy was out of work and looking for a job. I had an interview with the Bishop and one of the questions he asked me was, "What are you doing to work toward some goals and improve





yourself?" I admitted to him that just getting from sunup to sundown and maintaining my sanity amidst all my worries was a major accomplishment for me and that for the present that was the offering I brought to the Lord. I could say that because life was so hard right then for us that I knew I had all I could handle and I knew the Lord knew it, too, and didn't expect anything more from me.

Some of you are in quiet positions of lending support to your spouses and some of you are out in the trenches trying to win the battle there, but the important thing is to just do your best and know that whatever your role, the Lord will accept your offering and bless you for it. Mike received a phone call from Pres.

Clement last night about his BYU interview. Daddy drove Mike out to the Clements for the interview and took occasion to inquire about Shan's wife Tiffany. As you remember I mentioned, Shan was killed a few weeks ago in a harvest accident, leaving his widow with a small child and another on the



way. Sister Clement said it has been such a difficult thing for Tiffany and she goes in to her parent's home each night since she can't face being alone at night yet. Daddy mentioned that Pres. Clement seemed so tired and drawn. I'm sure that a tragedy like that takes a long time to recover from and I appreciated his willingness to see Mike and carry on with all his heavy duties in the Presidency despite the burdens he carries.

I have been thinking about Christmas and wondered what everyone is thinking in regard to gift exchange. Would you let me know if you want to participate or not. If this year is too tight financially of some of you, just let me know and we will adjust. If you want to participate, I can assign each of you one person or family and you can buy for them. We have gone with a \$10.00 limit in years past and the gift has included the family instead of individual members. We don't want this to be a burden to anyone.

Saturday Daddy, Paul, and Tim spent most of the day cutting up wood for winter. Paul asked if he could have a group over that night to play some outdoor night games and we agreed. When Dad and I returned home from a scout banquet we were amazed to find the whole driveway full of cars and kids running everywhere. As we went inside and finished up our Saturday's activities, we could hear yelling, screaming, running, and laughing outside. Finally about 10 the party moved inside and continued around the kitchen table over a game of Balderdash. Daddy and I lay in bed trying to go to sleep

and finally at 11:30 I let Paul know that the Sabbath was upon us and the party should be winding down. Within a few minutes the group was dispersing and good-byes were said. I am so grateful for the many fine friends that the boys have and for the mutual goodness in their relationships.

November 1, 1994

Well, we survived Halloween and are moving ahead to Thanksgiving! As most of you know, I HATE HALLOWEEN! Over a month ago, the neighbors began displaying pumpkins on their front steps, and SaraKay got excited and I haven't had any peace about it since. She wanted us to carve her a jack-o-lantern several weeks ago but I convinced her to wait since the pumpkin would be nothing more than a moldy heap if we carved it too soon. She kept changing ideas on what she wanted to be so I was glad I waited a while until time ran out and she couldn't change her mind again. She has drawn and colored pumpkins every day for the last month and was getting a little bored with that, too, so I was glad to take her "trick or treating" and be done with it.

I devoted yesterday to Halloween and we started out the day by buying a pumpkin and



carving it. Then I sewed a long flowing dress with a big bow in back and attached a piece of red lace to the hat we bought at DI last week. She wore it all day, dancing and prancing in front of the mirrors and watching the veil trailing along behind. We also made Halloween cookies and she decorated the faces with string licorice. When Tim got home, he helped a little and we both laughed at some of the masterpieces she was working on, better known as "Scar Faces". By 5:30 she was so hyper that I figured we had better get gone before she drove us all nuts. I convinced her that we would have to wear her winter coat under her princess dress and although I didn't say it, by the time we got the dress on over the coat, she looked more like the circus fat lady than an elegant princess. We took some cookies to Hannis and by the time we returned home, SaraKay was so cold that we changed coats and wore the one with the hood, tightly tied, added her mittens, and tied down her hat with a large piece of flat lace. It was a miserably cold night. Daddy drove and Melanie Hanni and I opened car doors and got kids in and out between houses. Sometimes we walked along if the houses were close together but our neighborhood is pretty scattered so the kids mostly rode. I had spent a miserable day recovering from a dental appointment and my monthly migraine and getting out in the cold night about did me under. I was grateful when SaraKay decided that she was cold and tired and wanted to come home.

We left Paul in charge of the door duty at home and he and Mike came up with a crazy trick they were pulling on all the little kids that came. By the way, ever since Steve and David rigged up the flying dummy in the garage one year, we have not had very many trick or treaters, so doing door duty is not a big deal. Anyway, when we arrived home, Mike showed us a big platter that had on it a raw potato, a tomato, a bag of lettuce, and an onion. When kids rang the bell, Mike and Paul would open the door and say something like this, "We know that candy isn't good for you so we have



decided this year to give out vegetables instead." They would then offer the child the platter of vegetables and wait for him to take one. Only then would they admit the joke and give the dismayed little person the real treat. They were having a great time with it all and I was so sick I just went to bed and tried to ignore that they were my sons.

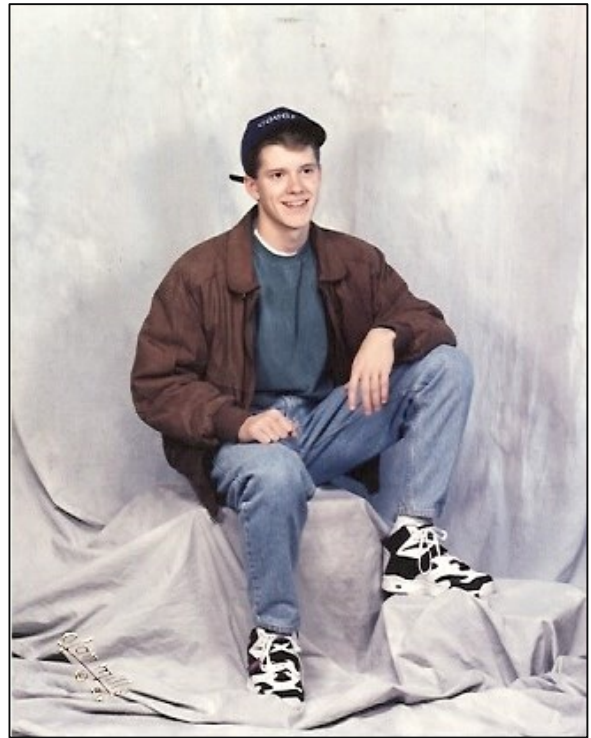
They also had a study group going on at the kitchen table at the same time and one of the members brought pizza and then another group dropped in with a plate of cookies and they all went in for ice cream andwell, who knows what all went on but Daddy took care of things for me and I sacked out and awoke this morning feeling human again. SaraKay is back in costume again today and will probably wear it until it's in shreds and falls off. But, the pressure of my least favorite holiday is past and we can resume living again.

Last week I took Mike for his senior pictures. We are trying a new thing this year and taking advantage of cheap and free sittings in the hope that we can get some good pictures and

not spend so much. I felt really good about his sitting and think he will be pleased with what we come up with. He and Paul are meeting with a surgeon next week and scheduling to have their wisdom teeth removed over the Christmas holiday. Daddy's big event of the week was distributing the popcorn for the annual fund raiser and seeing that it got delivered to the right people. He borrowed a trailer from Randy Cox to expedite things and in the process came into possession of several hardwood pallets that the popcorn was shipped on. When he returned the trailer, Randy told him that he would give him \$2.00 for every hardwood pallet and that he would deduct it from our wood bill. Deal!

Daddy and the boys finished up the last of the wood last weekend and it looks very clean and spiffy in the pasture. Today is blustery and cold and a big snow storm is due. Yesterday the roads in Teton National Park were closed because of the terrible snow storm they were receiving. Although I hate the thoughts of bad weather, I know we need the moisture and I'm grateful for it. We participated in a ward temple session last Friday night and that was very special. Saturday night, Daddy hosted a dinner here for his Wood Badge Beaver Colony and we had a fun and interesting night getting acquainted with that bunch. Luckily, everybody brought food and I had a minimum of preparation.

Sunday morning we performed in sacrament meeting and it went well. We are beginning practice on Christmas music....my favorite music! Daddy won't be writing this week since he was so busy taking care of things last night he didn't get a letter written and I can't wait until tomorrow because I have a presentation in our annual auxiliary training session that I need to work on. The topic I have been given is, "How to build a successful ward choir". Also this weekend is the annual Fine Arts Christmas Fashion show and luncheon and I am in charge of getting help for two shifts in the kitchen and helping with the meal. Daddy



has the University of Scouting, Tim has a campout, Mike has work, so looks like Paul ends up babysitting. We know you are all busy and under a lot of stress with your own responsibilities. Sometimes when I think of all the things that could go wrong, (Daddy says I'm good at that) I feel an overwhelming gratitude that we are all well and able to face the challenges that come to us. Mom

November 7, 1994

[Dad] Last week I made it back to orchestra again. It was rewarding to be able to sight read through just about everything we played. I need to strengthen my lip muscles though (look out, Sue) because I can't play long enough at a time.

The priests went to the mortuary last Tuesday night. It was really fascinating to have Perry Hawker tell us about his business. Many of the conventional marketing ploys are not effective in the funeral home. Who would go for a "two for the price of one" sale? His hearse is in need of being replaced but it would take about \$75,000 to buy a new one. It was a little eerie opening up the crematory

that had been cooling since noon and seeing the bones and skull almost intact. They turn to dust when they are touched. He showed us some metal joints that came from previous individuals. He also took us into the room where he embalms the bodies. There is quite an art to that process to preserve coloring, shrink a bloated body, or fill out a shriveled one. It was interesting to listen to his feelings about helping people cope with death and how close he feels to those he works with. The boys were fascinated, but I don't think any of them are set on pursuing the occupation of mortician.

Saturday was a good day to get a bunch of honey do's done. From filling the wood box, taking over the garbage, delivering hardwood pallets to Randy, putting away hoses, and putting up the plastic over the patio door it was nice to get a bunch of winterizing done. Sunday was fast day and both your mother and I bore our testimonies. We feel so blessed! No parent could be prouder of their children!

I really enjoyed teaching the Priests on Sunday. The lesson was about reverence for spiritual things and I hope I was able to create an atmosphere of reverence and give them some food for thought from the scriptures and the prophets. We started out listening to Merrill Jensen's "Beyond" for a few minutes, talked about reverence for God and His Holy Name, reverence for the calling of the Lord's servants, reverence for the Lord's House, and reverence for all things sacred. I used Arch's experience at Council Bluffs and

Becky's experience at Adam Ondi Ahman for examples. I like President Kimball's quote, *"In a very real sense, what is said of the sacred temples of the Church is applicable to every 'house of the Lord,' whether it be a meetinghouse or any place where the Saints worship, or in fact, any Latter-day Saint home."* President David O. McKay defined the full range of reverence when he said *"A great man is reverent. He reverences Deity; he reverences all things associated with Deity."* Society seems to be so irreverent. It seems like there is very little respect for things sacred, for individuals, for integrity and institutions that teach moral values. I am grateful for the perspective the Gospel gives us and value the sacred spiritual experiences I have had. Sacred sanctuaries (including our home) are a constant source of sanity and peace.

[Mom] It was nice to have Dad write first this week. Yesterday was very hectic and things never did calm down until almost midnight. Last Monday at the weekly planning meeting, one of the other scout professionals volunteered his wife to bring in lunch for the group on the following Monday (yesterday). Daddy felt like he should follow suit and so he





offered my help. I was glad to do it except that having a dinner ready for 12 men by 11:00 on a Monday morning is quite a task especially when Sunday is so full. I got up yesterday at 6:00 when Tim and Daddy left to play ball at the church and when Paul got up to practice the piano. I started right then to mix up rolls and punch and get some of the preparation going. I had planned to also make that delicious pumpkin dump cake that is such a treat but the pumpkin I had thawed out wasn't enough and I ended up running late trying to thaw more. The rolls were ready about the time the dump cake needed to cook and I called my neighbor to see if I could use her oven. By the time I had transported the rolls in the bumpy and cold car, they had deflated and I brought them back home and let them rise again. What a trying and full morning! It was a relief to get things done and transported to the scout office. It was fun to have lunch with the crew and feel their appreciation.

By 12:30 we had things loaded and SaraKay and I headed home. It was an early release day at school and so I made an appointment in Pocatello for Mike and Paul to have a consultation about their wisdom teeth. It looks like they are scheduled to have it done the 27th of December. They are hoping to be

recovered in time for the New Years Eve Dance.

Tim wanted to check a sport store for a Hakey Sak so he and two friends and SaraKay came along and we spent the next few hours at the dentist and shopping. Last night after home evening, Mike and I spent more time finishing up his BYU applications and reviewed the Tylenol scholarship form and what was left to get it off this week. It has really kept us hopping to meet these deadlines.

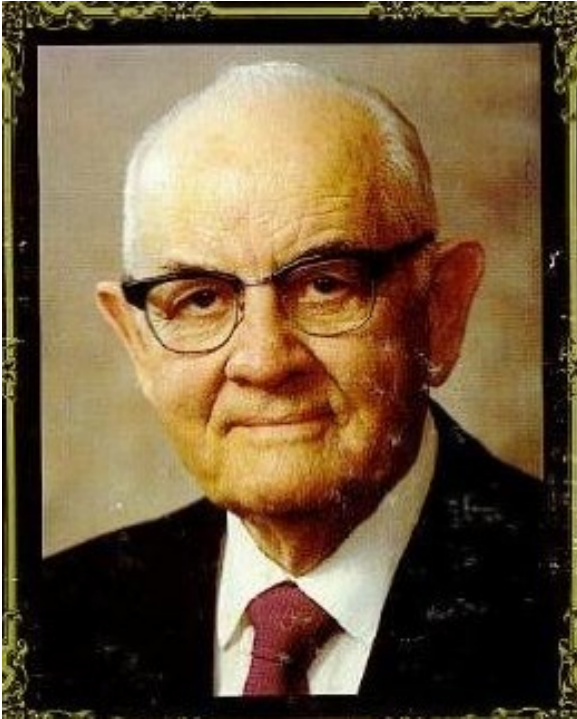
Paul and Tim have been preparing for Festival this weekend and are getting bored of the duet scene.

I'm sure some of you remember your "duet days" and are glad you don't have to relive that. Remember the time Steve and David played a duet and got so mad at each other at the recital while trying to perform their piece that they nearly came to blows right there on the piano bench in front of the whole audience?

Last Saturday was the big Fine Arts Christmas Fashion Show and Luncheon and I helped in the kitchen. We fed 350 women a turkey dinner and didn't finish up until about two. I was so tired that I came home and missed the BYU ballgame to take a good nap. Mike and I had an appointment to see his senior picture proofs at Olan Mills at 3:45. I was very pleased with some of the poses and he felt alright about them. He has ordered some to give to family and friends. The only hard thing about all this senior business with Mike is that I am going to have to turn around and do it all over again next year with Paul! I can hardly bear the thought of having Paul leave within a year of Mike.

Last night before home evening, Daddy was practicing his trumpet, Paul was practicing the piano, and SaraKay had the metronome going. Mike came into the living room and said, "How did you stand it when there were

10 kids at home?" Good question. We still have quite a bit of activity and noise around here but with Mike and Paul both gone, it will make a big difference and I'm not looking forward to it.



We visited Grandpa and Grandma Larsen Sunday evening and they reviewed with us their upcoming plans. They are going to be able to visit Mark and Rita on their return from Florida the last of December. I know that will mean a lot to them. Grandpa said that the last time he called Mark, Mark said they had not been able to bring Jessica home from the hospital since the seizure. I am sure that has been hard on everyone, especially Jessica since she seemed to relish the times she spent at home.

I received a call from Grandpa and Grandma Richards and they mentioned that Nate has been down with phlebitis (blood clots in the leg) and needs our prayers. Chelsea is still planning on going to the temple the week of Thanksgiving and if the weather holds, Nate and Maureen will be going to Utah for that. I have thought lately of the financial tightrope that most of us are walking right now and of how dependant I feel on the Lord's watch

care over each of us. It is hard to live with financial worries but I know that the Lord is aware of each of us and will help us.

November 13, 1994

[Dad] We had stake conference this weekend. It was a sweet spiritual conference; I think a lot of the sensitivity was because of Shan's death and what President and Sister Clements have been through the last few weeks. Another reason was because of the focus on children including a Primary children's chorus that furnished the music today. Last night we saw a video, "On the Way Home," and couldn't help being touched. Especially as we saw the sisters teaching the family in the video and their baptism, we could imagine Becky and John teaching and baptizing and there was a great profusion of tear-like droplets of water running down my cheeks. Mom had a great birthday with family and friends honoring her. I was able to surprise her with a new vest similar to the one she tried to make at Relief Society that didn't turn out. Thanks to each of you for touching base in your own special way.



Yesterday was the annual Scouting for Food drive. It was raining all morning but we had a

successful drive. We gathered 685 cans from our ward and involved close to 30 people in an excellent service to the community.

Work has been interesting with a recent change in assignment coming to me. This is my last popcorn sale, in the future I am going to be responsible for the Council newsletter, which has been rather hit and miss since the merge. It is a big job when you consider the public relations and communications responsible for that tool. Any creative ideas are welcome.

For Explorers this week we did Ethical Controversies. The boys were divided into teams of two. Each group of four was given a situation involving some ethical issue. Each team takes a side of the issue and tries to convince the other side of their position. Then they have to change sides and argue the other side of the issue and then come to consensus as to the correct answer. There are some interesting situations that are very likely to be faced in real life and the boys enjoyed it.

A little while ago I heard from a couple that I helped to bring into the Church in Redditch, England. They immigrated to Australia and raised their family in the Church and are now serving in the presidency of the Sydney Temple. I have had them on my mind for several weeks and finally got around to writing them today. I thought I would include a paragraph or two of that letter:

“Upon my return home, I returned to Ricks College where I met and married Susan Richards. We have been blessed with 4 and a half dozen children—four daughters and six sons, ranging in age from 28 to 4. We also have a Lamanite foster daughter. Including her two girls we have seven grandchildren. The Lord has blessed us abundantly and we have seen his hand in our lives. Each of our married children has married in the Temple. Four of our children have served missions so far: Steve to Spain, David to Puerto Rico, Becky in Oklahoma now, and John in Taiwan. Michael, Paul, and Tim are looking forward to going. All six boys are



Eagle Scouts, good students, and hard workers. Our daughters are beautiful, hard working, and faithful daughters of Zion. Our children are our best friends and we delight in the accomplishments of our family.

The Gospel has always been the focal point of our lives and the blessings we have received have often made me feel that my cup runneth over. We have had many opportunities for service in the Lord's kingdom: Elder's quorum president, Bishoprics, High Council, Bishop, Mission Presidency (Councilor to John Carmack), and many assignments with the youth. We have had many choice experiences in missionary work and have actually baptized as many or more Mexicans since my mission as I did English people on my mission. Sweet is the peace the Gospel brings and rich and deep the joy in seeing it take root and change lives."



Another choice experience today was going with Paul to receive his Patriarchal Blessing. What a beautiful blessing with many unique things mentioned. I'll let Mom elaborate.

[Mom] It truly was a special birthday for me! Daddy mentioned that I tried to make a vest at Relief Society homemaking meeting. I have always felt inadequate when it comes to sewing. We have several women in our ward who are very gifted in that area and some of them were there Thursday doing projects as I was working on my vest. Claudia Wray was in charge and she fitted me for one and we began sewing it. When we got part way through, I tried it on and it didn't fit right. Claudia tried all sorts of alterations and soon half the Relief Society sisters were giving opinions on how to get it to work. We unpicked seams, steam pressed, took tucks, and on and on. Finally I pretended that it looked okay and brought it home. Since last Thursday, I've received five offers from sisters who have been willing to help me find a way to make it work. Although I was frustrated with it, I was also very touched by the many sweet sisters who were willing to lend a hand. The most important thing I learned was that even the best seamstresses have to work at making things right and that many of the struggles I have at my sewing machine are typical. Maybe I'm not as stupid and inept as I thought I was. Saturday morning Daddy presented me with a surprise from ZCMI—a brocaded vest just like the one I had ruined. It fit perfectly and really looks nice.

Let me give you an update on Nate. When he returned to the doctor, they found that he didn't have phlebitis after all but just swelling so he is on the mend and up and about a little. We tried to call Mark last night but were unable to get him. We know they have not been able to bring Jessica home since her seizure but that is the last word we've heard.

We have scheduled Tim's Eagle Court of Honor for 6 p.m. the evening of December 22nd. That is the day Shauntel and Randy arrive from Iowa and that is also the week that Steve has for vacation from work. It was very important to Tim that some of the extended family attend so we waited until Christmas. It is challenging to schedule

anything that close to the holidays, but we are moving ahead.

I received word from Aunt Jeanie that Julianne is going home for Thanksgiving to meet Miken's new beau. Sounds like maybe a wedding is forthcoming. We are going to go to Salt Lake to Kathy's for Thanksgiving, play a little ball, visit and eat and drive home Thursday night. It will be fun to see some of my extended family.

Last Thursday night Mike was featured on the KPVI nightly news. He was selected as KPVI Ambassador for the year from Snake River and they did a little segment on him during their 10:00 news show. He did a good job with his interview. The newscaster that came to the school to video the segment asked Mike if he happened to be related to Becky, who was the Ambassador a few years ago and he said that she was his sister. It gave his morale a boost to be recognized. He is awaiting a second ACT score and word from BYU.

Paul's blessing was very special. I know it is appropriate to share blessings with family members and if any of you would like to, I would love to have a copy of your blessing. It was rather touching to accompany Paul to Patriarch Evan's home and have him comment on Paul's rich heritage. Patriarch Evan's has been a long time friend and admirer of Grandpa Larsen and knows and respects my father also. He was very complimentary of them both. We are running out of family and we'll have only two more times to experience accompanying children to receive their blessings. I still recall quite vividly each time one of you received your beautiful memories.

(All blessings are recorded in Larsen Legacy: Volume I).

We finished up duet festival last week. Every time I attend a piano recital and watch the



young children and teens perform, I am renewed and inspired. What a marvelous thing to see the accomplishments of these young musicians, to witness the love flowing from the parents and piano teachers, and to take time out to say, "Hats off to you! Mom

November 21, 1994

[Mom] Last week Zelda Williams, one of our mowing clients, passed away. I heard that she was in a coma and very sick so it didn't surprise us. We'll miss her. She was a very sweet lady who was always good to the boys and had a can of pop ready for them when they finished her lawn. Her last few months were very labor intensive for her two daughters, Julie Martin and Elaine Jones. Julie lost her father, who was sick for years before his passing and has taken care of her husband, Larry, who had brain cancer and died last month after a long battle. Julie attended ISU and finished up her teaching degree and then nursed her mother, Zelda, until her death last week. What a marathon for her! It is hard to imagine that kind of stress and strain and the strength to cope

with it from day to day. She is a marvelous lady and deserving of some rest and relaxation for a while.

One of the blessings of living in an area for several years is that you get to learn life's lessons by observing others and their struggles. There have been many sad things happening in our community lately and my heart goes out to those involved. I know we each have our turn at hardship and heartache, and I am grateful for the relatively peaceful time our immediate family has enjoyed this past year. So many of our desires have been realized and I recognize the Lord's



watch care over us.

We continue to pray for Jessica. They brought her home this past week. She hasn't had any more seizures and they thought she might be alright at home. Rita has fixed her study on the main floor with a hospital bed and moved Jess's things into there so they can take care of her without having to go upstairs. Jessica will be more in the center of activity and hopefully this will hasten her recovery.

Saturday night was the Buddy Dance and Mike and Paul both had dates. They were supposed to be home around midnight and about that time I awoke to the sounds of voices in the kitchen area. Mike and his date went into a pizza parlor in Blackfoot after the dance with friends and his date's mother called the parlor and told her daughter to head home as quickly as possible. They heard that there was an armed escapee from the State Hospital in the area and she wanted her daughter home and safe.

When Mike got home, Paul was just arriving and they both hurried into the house and locked the doors and were sitting visiting in the kitchen when they heard a door slam in the garage and surmised that maybe the escapee was holing up for the night in one of our cars. They immediately came back to the bedroom and awoke Daddy and I. Daddy did what any concerned father and protector would do in a similar situation: rolled over and went back to sleep. I got up and the three of us turned off all the lights, made sure all the doors were locked, pressed our ears against the back door to see if we could get a clue to his whereabouts, wrung our hands, moved Paul





defeat. What a disappointment! I just knew they should have tried for a field goal that last 17 seconds and been satisfied with a tie!

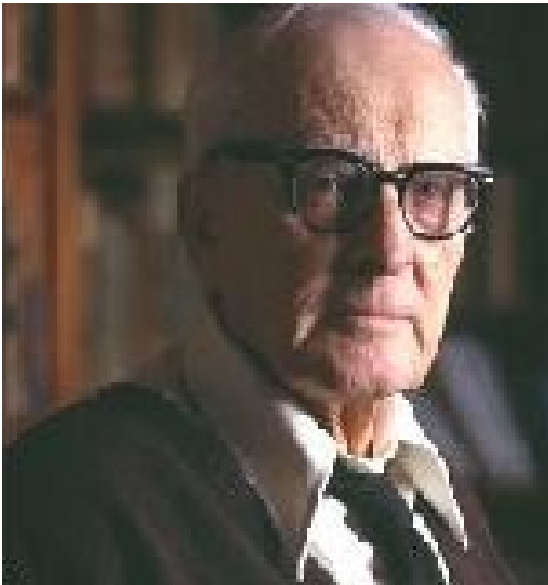
We are planning to travel to Salt Lake Wednesday night and spend Thursday with the Richards' at Kathy's. We will return Thursday evening. Our thoughts are with each of you and we hope that you have a special Thanksgiving. Take time to count your blessings. Mom [Dad] It seems like the pace we keep isn't quite as fast as we used to. Especially for me. I've had my foot bothering me enough lately that I've used my cane. It was fun to go to Snake River's final game of the season and

and Mike's blankets into the TV room so they could sleep close by each other, and Paul located our baseball bats just in case the situation escalated. It was a bright moon-lit night and we peered out of our darkened windows trying to see the escapee's profile against the white snow, but finally we gave up and went back to bed. We haven't heard whether the police caught him or not but it made for an exciting end to this year's annual Buddy Dance. You may be interested in knowing that the door slam was a box knocked out of the garbage can by a marauding wolf or dog.

We had a fairly miserable time dealing with the double loss of our Snake River football team who lost the state championship game Friday night and then to agonize through the BYU/Utah game only to see the Y go down in

to see them take 2nd in the State A-2 tournament. Based on the growth we have been experiencing, I guess our days as an A-2 school are numbered. It is going to be much tougher to compete with the A-1 schools in everything.

I enjoyed teaching the Priests again this weekend and have been putting together a YM's budget and a combined budget for YMen and YWomen. In addition, it has been my responsibility to put together the baptismal excursion this Saturday. We will be taking 47 youth and about 12 adults to the temple, leaving here at 4:00 a.m. There were 10 Priests in the quorum Sunday and we had an excellent discussion about honesty and integrity. I have read quite a few of the conference talks as I prepared to go home



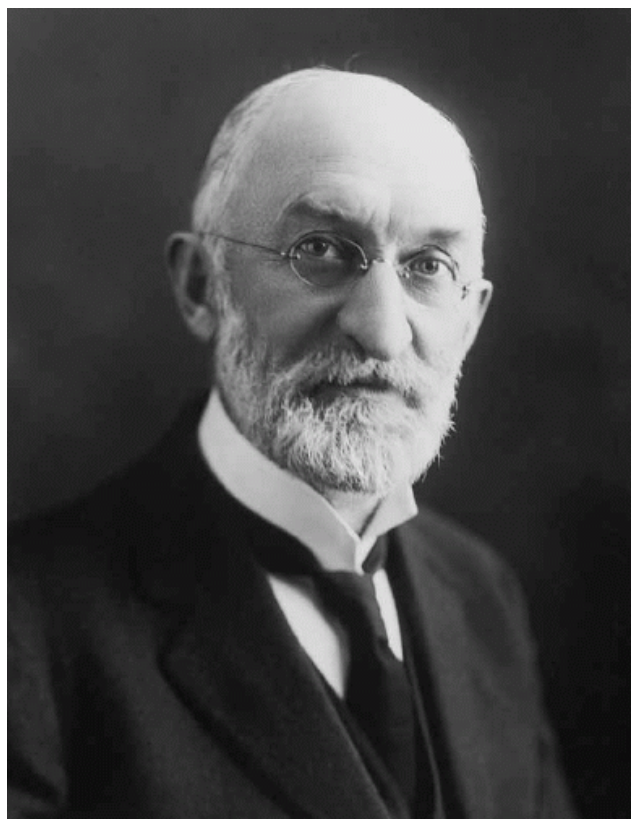
teaching. I couldn't help but be touched again with the spirit of general conference and the inspiration of the brethren and the relevance and directness of their messages. What a blessing the gospel is in our lives! I am so proud to have two missionaries in the field helping to spread the message of the restoration—sowing seeds and reaping a harvest as well.

I would like to share a couple quotes with you. The first is from President Heber J. Grant: "I do not believe that any man lives up to his ideals, but if we are striving, if we are working, if we are trying, to the best of our ability, to improve day by day, then we are in the line of our duty. If we are seeking to remedy our defects, if we are so living that we can ask God for light, for knowledge, for intelligence, and above all, for His spirit, that we may overcome weaknesses, then, I can tell you, we are in the straight and narrow path that leads to life eternal. Then we need have no fear; no man is perfect but one who strives earnestly to conquer weaknesses and grow into perfection does not sin. That is to say, he is not a sinner. A sinner is one who indulges in sin habitually because he takes pleasure in it."

The next quote is on the same lines but comes from Hugh Nibley: "Who is righteous? Anyone who is repenting. No matter how bad

he has been, if he is repenting he is a righteous man. There is hope for him. And no matter how good he has been all his life, if he is not repenting, he is a wicked man. The difference is which way you are facing. The man on the top of the stairs facing down is much worse off than the man on the bottom step who is facing up. The direction we are facing, that is repentance; and that is what determines whether we are good or bad." Some interesting thoughts! Applying that standard should change our normal perceptions regarding who is good or bad, a sinner or not. Many times we are too harsh in our judgments because we don't know which way a person is facing. We judge by what we have seen them do and put them on the top of the stairs or the bottom, but we don't really know which way they are facing.

We heard about an attorney who worked for the Church who was picked up in a prostitution sting in Salt Lake. Apparently, he was involved in a study of the effects of pornography and was facing the wrong way.





Now to change the topic to honesty. The January 16, 1990, issue of Parents' Magazine reported that 78 percent of respondents in a poll expressed a desire to return to *"traditional values and old-fashioned morality."* This is something we must do if we are to survive, as a society. Elder James E. Faust, in his April 1987 conference address taught: *"Adults and children need to know that public and private morality is not outmoded. We need to love our children enough to teach them that laws, policies, and public programs with a moral and ethical basis are necessary for the preservation of a peaceful, productive, compassionate, and happy society. Without the qualities and characteristics of integrity, honesty, commitment, loyalty, respect for others, fidelity, and virtue, a free and open society cannot endure."*

In a recent editorial in our paper, Ben Wattenberg was discussing the outcome of the election and said, *"The driving force was 'values, 'a rubric about which the public believes, with some merit, the Democrats are squishy."* He quoted a Wall Street Journal poll which asked whether the social and economic

problems that face America are mainly the result of a decline in moral values, or the result of financial pressures and strains on the family. The results: Moral values--54%, Financial pressures: 34%. A Newsweek poll asked about blame for the problems that make Americans dissatisfied. 57% answered that a lot of the blame is on *"the moral decline of people in general."* He concluded, *"Our central dilemma, values, which shows its face under a variety of labels—crime, welfare, race, family, what schools teach, quotas, and social issues, to begin a very long list—is an ancient one. It concerns*

whether freedom and order can co-exist." If we are to be people of honor, we must begin by being honest about our intents and motives. Once we accept personal responsibility for our behavior and start being totally honest with ourselves, we'll find we *"cannot be false to any man."* President Kimball said, *"Practically all dishonesty owes its existence and growth to this inward distortion we call self-justification. It is the first, the worst, and the most insidious and damaging form of cheating—to cheat oneself."* I hope you don't mind my soap box oratory.

November 28, 1994

[Mom] Happy Birthday to Shauntel today! We called her last night to wish her well and she said they had just returned from a wonderful weekend with Steph and Linds. The only problem with the weekend was that no one got much homework done. Why doesn't that surprise me?!! We left Wednesday night to go to Kathy's in Salt Lake. Mike didn't know until he got to work Wednesday afternoon if he could get off a little early so we could leave early. About 5:30 he called home and said he

would be ready to go at 6:00. We hurriedly packed the van, gassed up, picked up Mike, and by 6:13 we were pulling onto the freeway. SaraKay had been so hyper all day anticipating the trip that she was worn out and quickly fell asleep along with her brothers. It was a peaceful trip and the roads were clear.

We arrived at Kathy's three hours later. Grandpa and Grandma Richards were there already helping Kathy and Dick prepare for the rest of us. Thursday, Nate and Maureen and all of their children and spouses (including Chelsea's fiance) arrived and we finished getting the annual feast ready. The guys played basketball for most of the morning while we juggled the use of the oven with turkey, yams, dressing, etc. It was fun to be together and visit. It was also fun to enjoy Thanksgiving dinner and take a moment to think about the miraculous events that have transpired in the last several hundred years that have had such a profound influence on our quality of life, both economically as well as spiritually.

In a fireside last Sunday evening, Bishop Moon spoke about the day in which we live and the promises that we made in heaven to our forefathers that we would do all we could to see that the genealogy work and ordinances were done for them. He bore a strong testimony about some of the



experiences he has had as he and Bonnie have done temple work for names they have submitted over the past few years. Daddy and I have felt the need to get more involved in genealogical work now that our family demands are lessening and this Saturday we are going to attend a seminar about the computer helps available to us for genealogical purposes.

One fun tradition that the Richards have at Thanksgiving is to have a variety of pies. Between Kathy and Maureen and Grandma, there were 27 pies provided. It was quite a challenge for us to leave Kathy's Thursday night and head home knowing that there were still a few pies left uneaten, but we managed to con Grandma out of a couple and we left about six for Idaho. The rest of the weekend was enjoyable and included witnessing a sealing at the temple, doing baptisms for the dead and attending an Eagle Court of Honor for Adam Reader.

After we went to the temple Friday night, we went to visit with Steve and Bonnie at Bensons. We had not seen Rachel since the day she was blessed and it was such a treat to get to see her and how she has grown. She has a little hanging jumper that she loves to sit in and she really gets it jumping. She is a little doll! We look forward to Christmas and some time with her and Steve and Bonnie

during the holidays. Dave called last night and said that he would like us to include in the family letter some good news from Arizona. Laurel Ann will be getting a new brother or sister in '95! The due date is in May. Andrea has been struggling with morning sickness but hopefully she will feel better when she gets past those difficult first few months. I can empathize with her and pray that she will be able to manage all she is doing and find time to rest.

Mike is anxiously awaiting word from BYU. He has a friend that has received his acceptance and he is hoping that he will get a similar letter soon. Paul and he are both excited about their upcoming Chambers Christmas program. Paul Page has helped them with it and it should really be good. Tim has been going over early morning to the stake center to play ball with a group of men. He is getting big enough that he isn't so intimidated by adults on the court and he is trying to get in shape for tryouts after Christmas.

Last night just before SaraKay's bedtime, he wrote some letters to SaraKay, signed them "Santa Claus", pretended that they were outside the front door in the snow, and had SaraKay so excited about Santa Claus that I wasn't sure she was ever going to go to bed. Just what I need: a four-year-old with no concept of time thinking Jolly ol' St. Nick is due to arrive any moment!

This past Thanksgiving I thought about our two missionaries and wondered what they were doing to make the day special. Time is ticking away and soon Becky will be getting home; then John. What a blessing they are to us and how grateful we are for the service they are giving. We appreciate their weekly letters and look forward to the time that they will be with us again.

[Dad] Well, I can't think of much to add to your mother's account of last week. I left my Franklin planner at Kathy's and it hasn't caught up to me yet, so I don't know anything about anything. It was a treat to be able to spend Thanksgiving with family. Sue and I just wanted to stay home but I'm glad we didn't. When someone asked when we were leaving to come home I replied, "When the pies are gone."

We really enjoyed being in the temple with the Ellis's. President Wirkus was the sealer and we had a good visit.

Bonnie's mom, Jean, always makes us feel so much at home when we go there. Steve and Bonnie look so young compared to how I feel. The young are meant to have and raise babies—us grandparents are good for spoiling them and then sending them home.

The following morning we took 43 young people to the temple at 4:00 a.m. We baptized another ward—about 420 people—in about 2 hours. The kids were really good that





early in the morning. We had a great breakfast of sausage, eggs, muffins, ham, cheese, croissants, bananas, and oranges waiting for us when we got back to the church. The kids inhaled all the food in sight and then some of them played ball in the cultural hall.

Let me echo Sue's comments about John and Becky's letters. We literally watch the mailbox for them each week and revel in their experiences. What joy we receive from service in the Kingdom. Our love to each of you—may this season of anticipation be filled with songs of joy, colorful lights, times of sharing and giving, and most of all, a focus on the Savior and the beautiful thoughts of peace on earth, goodwill to all men. Love, DAD

December 6, 1994

[Mom] It's snowing today, a beautiful, peaceful snowfall that has flocked everything. Last weekend we had a thaw that left puddles, but Sunday morning it began to snow and hasn't quit since except for a few hours. Despite Tim's prayers, there has

not been an attendant wind and so we are in a winter wonderland with school and no closure yet. There is something about this kind of weather that slows down the pace of life and drives people indoors. I have enjoyed the early darkness and the long evenings to be with the family and get some inside projects completed. Our home is warm and cozy and life is good. Although I'm excited to have Shauntel and Randy here for the holidays, I dread the thought of them being in Wyoming and Colorado in this kind of weather and hope they will pack their sleeping bags and food just in case they have to wait for a road to be plowed out.

We are getting things ready around here for the holidays although we haven't yet made our annual trip to the tree lot to find a beautiful (and hopefully inexpensive) tree to grace our living room. Daddy and I are going out to dinner Thursday night for his birthday and maybe we can pick one then. Last week during the thaw would have been an ideal time to browse the tree lots, but as usual, we wait until the coldest day of the winter, bundle up and then freeze trying to make the decision. Hopefully the away bunch has all received their Christmas packages by now. I mailed off most things the first of last week. I have yet to get our Christmas cards sent.

I'm busy finishing up my Merrie Miss class and preparing the choir for the annual





Christmas cantata. We are doing one that involves the congregation in several numbers. We had so many people to practice last week that we had to set up a few folding chairs. What fun! Mike and Paul are busy getting their trimester finished up and preparing for the Chambers Christmas production. Paul Page has them "jumping through hoops" but they are excited about how good it is. They have been in an advanced Biology class this trimester and they have come in with Paul first and Mike second highest in the entire class. Mike continues to hang on to his 4.0. It has been hard to find time to fill out scholarship forms with his work, school, and extracurricular activities all pressing.

Daddy is organizing a Bountiful Temple trip to the open house this Saturday morning for about 120 members of the young men and women's groups and families. Our three boys will be going but I have decided to stay home with SaraKay rather than stand in long lines with her pulling on my arm and dancing around. She doesn't have much patience for standing long anywhere.

Grandpa and Grandma Larsen are leaving tomorrow for a week's stay in Hawaii with a condo share. They will be back in time to be to the open house at Gary and Linda's

although they won't make it to the wedding. We are looking forward to that time with Garen and family. Hopefully Steve and Bonnie can be there, too.

When I went in for my temple recommend interview last Sunday Bishop Godfrey asked me how things were going and I related that our family is enjoying many sweet blessings. He commented that there are many in the ward with serious problems and that we should be grateful for

the prosperity we have. I assured him that I was! I know the Lord is aware of us and mindful of our needs. Keep having home evenings and family prayers, pay your tithing and honor the Sabbath. There is safety in living the gospel.

December 12, 1994

[Mom] In a few minutes we will be leaving for the Chamber's Christmas show. Paul and Mike have been very excited about it although they said that their performance for the middle school today wasn't as sharp as they had wanted it to be. Hopefully they got the bugs worked out and tonight will be better. Tim, SaraKay, and I headed into Kesler's after school today to buy a Christmas tree. It's time to decorate and have it look like Christmas around here.





Daddy and I had a wonderful opportunity last night. We attended a Messiah “sing along” in Pocatello complete with a beautiful orchestra and amazing soloists. There were about 500-600 people of all ages singing along for the chorus numbers. I have never had much exposure to the “Messiah”, only learning a few isolated numbers over the years, but last night I heard and helped sing about 25 songs and I was touched by the beauty and majesty of it! What a marvelous witness of the Divinity of Jesus Christ! Hopefully we can go again next year but take the kids with us. I was amazed at the number of young people in the audience.

Those of you who know Sherry Carroll would be interested to know she was killed in a two car collision the night of the big storm. She lost control of her car and plowed head-on into the back of a van. She was killed instantly and left a family of six children. It has been sad.

Last week was our annual BSA Christmas dinner and party. Daddy was in charge of entertainment and lined up Rick’s trio. It was

absolutely delightful! Rick has such a beautiful voice and the women were able to blend with him forming an interesting sound. They did several numbers including sacred and pop. What a treat! It was fun to see the other professionals and feel like we are no longer the “new kids on the block”.

We had a wonderful time at the Chambers concert last night. The group worked hard to put on a quality show and it was one of the best I’ve seen. Last night as I watched Mike and Paul performing I thought of other performances in years past. Elaine Harper was sitting near me and during intermission she leaned over and commented on Mike and Paul and then she looked at SaraKay and said, “Is she going to sing, too? How do you get all those kids of yours to be singers, anyway?” That was an interesting question; I admitted that each of you had it in your genes and it would have been tough to keep you from singing.

[Dad] These last few weeks I have felt like I couldn’t have been much busier if I was Bishop. Yesterday was typical with meetings and assignments with only about a two hour break from 7:30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. The Messiah was a special treat—it is so powerful with an orchestra and that many voices. I can imagine singing in a heavenly choir. Sue mentioned the message of the words, a powerful affirmation of the Savior and his mission.

On Saturday we took about 130 from our ward—including most of the youth—to the Bountiful Temple open house. What a beautiful imposing edifice. I am desirous of going there for a regular session and spending some quiet time in the Celestial room—it is so beautiful and peaceful. The Church could give most government entities lessons on crowd control and how to handle large volumes of people. Everything was done with such class, simplicity, and efficiency. Afterward, a family in a ward near there had offered to feed us for \$2.00 per person. They had sloppy Joes, chips, vegetables and dip,

and ice cream sandwiches for us. It was a real service that made the trip more affordable and special. As they were feeding us I noticed the father of the family looked familiar. Sure enough, it was Bruce Cowley, a friend of mine at Ricks College whom I hadn't seen for 30 years.

Friday night the BSA Christmas party was held in the Shilling House in Blackfoot. It is a fascinating old home and the Parrishes did a fine job with the meal. It was a special treat to hear Rick's trio sing—they were wonderful! One of the lighter numbers they did was called, "The Monotone Angel" and had us all laughing as Rick sang an imitation of an angel who couldn't carry a tune while the ladies kept their parts going. It almost cracked them up so much they couldn't finish the song. We pray that each of you are filled with a renewed appreciation of the Savior and feelings of love and peace and gratitude during this season of the year.

Christmas '94

Greetings from the Steve Larsen family! The holidays bring memories of friends and shared moments and prompt us to express



our love to you.

Steve continues to enjoy his employment with BSA and recently added Young Men's president to his list of responsibilities. He's enjoyed being involved with his teen-age sons in that capacity. I continue to "keep the home fires burning" although there are fewer bodies to keep warm than there used to be!

Stephani and Lindsay welcomed 10 lb. Joshua to their family in April. Linds is in his final year of his doctorate program at Indiana University and Steph continues to serve as Primary President.

Shauntel and Randy reside in Coralville, Iowa while Randy attends medical school at the University of Iowa. Shauntel is a school psychologist and on Sundays runs herd on nine very active "Sunbeams".

Jonie, our Indian daughter, lives in Cass Lake, Minnesota and attends college at

nearby Bemidji. She is mother to two active pre-schoolers and wife to Jeff—a gifted Indian artisan.

Steve and his wife, Bonnie, are in their final year at the “Y” and eagerly awaiting his graduation with his Masters in Accountancy. They are the proud and grateful parents of a daughter, Rachel, who arrived a month early giving us all quite a scare!

David and Andrea reside in Tempe, Arizona where David pursues a dual MBA/MHA degree at Arizona State University. They both graduated from BYU in April following a busy year of school, work, little Laurel, recitals and such.

Becky is finishing up her last few months of missionary service in Missouri and loving every exhausting minute of it! John serves as mission secretary in the Taiwan Taichung Mission and will be home in August, and join three siblings at the “Y”.

Mike is a senior, filling out scholarship forms, serving on the student council, and working after school at a local grocery store. Paul, our junior, is involved in a variety of academic and musical pursuits. He worked this summer in the Camp Little Lemhi commissary. Tim, 13, has joined his five brothers in attaining the Eagle Scout rank and is looking forward to basketball tryouts in January. SaraKay, now four, is looking ahead to the day she'll be riding the school bus and learning to read.

Last summer we took a trip east to visit our married children and had opportunity to visit many Church history sites. It was a poignant experience for us to be informed of President Benson's passing by a tour guide as we arrived at the Carthage Jail

Visitor Center on Memorial Day. That sweet experience coupled with the church-wide commemoration of the martyrdom this year has left an indelible impression on us of the sacrifices made by so many that we could enjoy the blessings of the gospel in our lives today.

We join with you this season in celebrating the birth of our Lord and Savior and give thanks for His life and atoning sacrifice in our behalf. Love, Steve, Sue and all

December 27, 1994

[Dad] This will probably be the last family letter of 1994. It has been a year full of activities, events, travel, and learning. As a family we have been abundantly blessed as we have seen and done things that I never thought we would. Philmont Scout Ranch, Disneyland, Devil's Tower, Mount Rushmore, Wall Drug, Nauvoo, Carthage, Iowa, Indiana, and places between. This year flashes by with a kaleidoscope of memories. I am grateful for these family letters as a means of weekly recording those experiences. How we treasure each of you!

This past week has been no exception. It has been a rich and rewarding Christmas season with new memories of family and friends. How blessed we have been to have Bonnie and

Steve and Rachel here for much of the week. Shaunnie and Randy arrived Thursday and we have had some quality time and discussions with them.

Tim's Eagle Court of Honor was a real highlight and we were so grateful to be able to have as much family here as we did. Paul's Eagle Charge was one of the best I have ever heard. We had a pretty



good turnout of friends and several compliments about being able to get the job done in half an hour with so much panache (class, style). We were able to have Bonnie sing the opening song of "America" and Steve, Mike, Paul and I sang the closing song, yes, you guessed it, "You're an Eagle." Mom's tribute on Tim's life accomplishments was beautiful and with a little humor.

Steve and Bonnie are conscientious and loving parents. We all fell in love with Rachel and Sara Kay thought she was responsible to smother her with love and attention every moment she was here. As a couple, Steve and Bonnie sure pull together and it is a joy to see their eternal family unit growing.

Shaunnie and Randy have grown so much. As a couple they exhibit such strength and ease with each other. They have had some rich spiritual experiences and have grown so much from the trials they have faced. They continue to face some tough decisions regarding their family and need our continuing prayers and support.

Christmas Eve at Dad and Alva Lu's was a lot of fun. We enjoyed the good food and company. Let me thank each of you for your gifts and love expressed this Christmas (and throughout the year)! May the Lord's choicest blessings be with you. DAD

[Mom] Our Christmas has been a special one, although I have wished that some of you were not so far away that you couldn't drop in for a few days. It was special to have Steve and Bonnie here for an extended period; this is the first time they have spent the night since Rachel was born. It was hard to keep SaraKay from smothering Rachel. She would hold her, kiss her, and one time she came running into

the kitchen with the news, "Guess what, Mama. When I put my finger in Rachel's mouth, she sucks on it!" (We got that straightened out) Anyway, we loved having them here and also Shauntel and Randy. I just couldn't get enough of them as we talked late into the night without having to pay a long distance phone fee for the privilege.

Our cantata on Sunday was wonderful. The choir president made corsages and boutonnieres for everyone and it was impressive to hear 60 ward members join in singing Christmas music. We heard from both Becky and John and from David and

Andrea and Steph and Linds. We feel so grateful for each of you! May the year ahead bring each of you continued opportunities for growth and joy.

[Mom] Sorry this is so short. I woke up feeling like I had been run over by a truck (headache, sore throat) and knew I needed to get this letter copied while Mike gets his wisdom teeth

EAGLE SCOUT	
COURT OF HONOR	
TIMOTHY J. LARSEN	
CONDUCTING	Tony Watson Bishopric 1st Counselor
POSTING OF COLORS	Troop 260 and friends
MUSICAL NUMBER	"America" Bonnie Larsen
OPENING PRAYER	Allan F. Larsen Grandfather
CALL TO EAGLES NEST	
LIFE'S ACHIEVEMENTS	Susan R. Larsen
SPECIAL PRESENTATION	Stephen A. Larsen
EAGLE CHARGE	Paul Larsen
PRESENTATION OF AWARD	Dave Hansen Scoutmaster
MUSICAL NUMBER	"You're An Eagle" Larsen Family Accompanist: Shauntel Anderson
CLOSING PRAYER	Reed Hanni
RETIRE THE COLORS	Troop 260
REFRESHMENTS	
Tim would like to thank all the leaders and advisors who have helped and encouraged him in this accomplishment.	

removed today). Following is the essay I composed for Tim's Eagle Court of Honor. Thought you might enjoy it.

Timothy James Larsen was born on June 17th of '81.....the 10th child in the Steve and Sue Larsen home. It was a time of transition for the family: the farm had been sold, the house, too, and just two days before Tim arrived the family moved to Rockford and began a new life. Tim let his presence be felt from the very start and soon the family adopted the saying, "Tiny Tim, the terrible tyrant, is having too many temper tantrums today!" Fortunately, with time, Tim began to mellow and his disposition sweetened. With so many older siblings he grew up in an adult environment and was given lots of advice on every aspect of his life. His older brothers taught him his addition facts prior to going to school and when he boarded the bus on his first day of kindergarten, he stood by the bus driver and quoted, "1 plus 1 is 2, 2 plus 2 is 4, and 4 plus 4 is 8 and on and on. The bus driver was surprised and amused but patiently allowed him to continue and then motioned for him to take his seat. When his kindergarten teacher asked the class which TV show was their favorite, most responded with Sesame Street or Mr. Rogers. Tim's reply, "A Team".

Early in his life his love for sports manifested itself and he followed not only the BYU Cougars but several Pro teams, collecting cards and learning stats on many of his favorite players. He was a tough competitor at the sports he played and his bedroom wall is full of awards and honors he has received over the years in athletic competitions. He especially loves basketball and can be found on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings at 6 a.m. in the church gym playing ball before school.

In '90 Tim was blessed with a baby sister. All at once this rough and tumble nine year old was introduced to the world of babies, bottles, and pink bows. It came as a surprise to us all when he became SaraKay's biggest admirer and personal nanny. We saw Tim

develop a concern, compassion, and tenderness that we hadn't seen in him before. His attentiveness for her and protectiveness of her continues to this day. The other day when he arrived home from school he looked around for her and not finding her, he called out, "SaraKay, I'm home. Come bother me!"

Tim is an excellent student, a reluctant but obedient pianist, a hard worker, a gifted athlete and an avid scouter. He has tagged along with his Dad on scout activities for many years before becoming a scout himself and has enjoyed his opportunities to develop himself through the scouting program. He enjoys working with his hands and has decorated his room with crafts he has made over the years. His favorite classes at school are shop and student service and he recently won first place in the Elks Hoop Shoot contest for boys his age. He has completed the merit badges required for the Eagle award and continues to complete badges and work towards some Palms. He is gritty, honest, determined. He has always wanted to attain the Eagle Rank and kept pushing Steve and me so that he could get it accomplished earlier than any of his brothers. His drive and determination sometimes drives us all nuts, but I know that if he can apply these attributes to worthy goals, he can accomplish the things that are important to him. Tim and I used to read the Book of Mormon together each night, but about a year ago he set out on his own and has consistently read each night. This exercise has matured him and strengthened his resolve to be worthy of a mission in the years ahead.

Tim has chosen good friends and tries to honor his priesthood and be obedient to the things his Dad and I ask of him. I congratulate him on this special occasion, express my love, and wish him well. Mom

January 2, 1995

[Dad] As we begin a new year I am excited to anticipate some of the major events that we can expect in 1995. Some of those events are having John and Becky return with honorable releases, sending Mike on his mission, the Richards' family reunion, adding to the list of beautiful grandchildren, and many other events. 1994 has been a full and rewarding year with the many blessings that have come our way. Today is a day for contemplating and setting goals and objectives for the coming year. I hope that each of you are following the prophet's counsel and setting goals that will help you to become more Christ like. Speaking for myself, as I get older, it seems it is harder to remain humble, pliable, and teachable. It is a shock to find that 50 years of experience haven't endowed me with all the answers—a lot of them, but not all.

Let me say how wonderful it has been to have some family over this holiday. There is nothing more meaningful than home and family for the holidays!

One thing that I started last week was going in to the Blackfoot Pool to swim laps every night. I have a pass for 15 swims that



I will use up, but I don't know what will happen after that. It has been easier to do because of sharing the commitment with Randy Cox. Exercise commitments are easier to maintain if you are doing them with someone else. You are seldom both weak at the same time. Many goals are that same way; if you share them and report your progress, you have a greater incentive to keep on. I love each of you more than tongue can tell.



[Mom] It's nice to have a Monday to recuperate from the weekend! I started teaching a new group of Merrie Miss girls yesterday and am looking forward to this association another year. This 10-11 year age is wonderful. They are sweet and teachable and trying hard to live the gospel. I continue to enjoy the friendships I have developed with the children. It was fun to have SaraKay arrive home wearing a CTR ring and showing

it off with pride. Thank goodness for the programs of the Church and their influence on us.

I echo Daddy's sentiments about enjoying some special times with family. Shauntel and Randy left Saturday morning for Iowa and called last night to say that they arrived home, safe and well. It's always a challenge when they come home. They like to spend time with both families as well as aunts, uncles, and grandparents; it gets to be a real marathon by the time they have run from one place to another for 10 days. We do our best to get in our time, too, so I'm sure that returning to Iowa has its upside after the harried time in Idaho. I'm still nursing this terrible cold and sore throat and wondering if I need to see a doctor. Hopefully, Daddy won't get it. He has a horrendous week ahead, including hosting several meetings, dinners, seminars, and the national Endowment person of BSA for a few days as well as finishing up the quarterly paper and seeing that it gets distributed before Sunday. I offered to help in any way I could and then realized that Mike's Elk's Most Valuable Student Scholarship is due the 18th and that is going to take major effort to pull together. Paul finished up his junior scholarship and it is nearly ready to be mailed. Grandpa and Grandma Larsen are heading to Boise the 6th for the legislature. We always miss them.

I called Uncle Nate and visited for a few minutes about Chelsea's wedding and he seemed very happy with how things turned out. I would like to have been there; Nate and Maureen had a very strong showing from the Allsop's who live in the Northwest; all the married children and spouses were there for all the events.

The countdown has begun for Tim. Tomorrow is the first day of tryouts for basketball. He was selected as one of seven to play in an inner city tournament last week. He did a good job. He has a lot

of very fine ball players in his grade and he will have his hands full getting on the team. He has been playing on the ward team and doing a good job. Paul and Mike played last Wednesday on the Priest team and they do a good job, too. I was very hesitant to let Mike play because of his recent oral surgery. He was tired most of the week, but recovered enough to attend 2 parties, a dance, and a breakfast on New Year's Eve. He had conveniently let the word out that he was recovering from surgery and we had several concerned and compassionate girls who came visiting, bearing gifts such as ice cream, airplane models, and vocal performances.

He left at 5:45 this morning to take inventory at Kesler's, had a breakfast date at nine, and then more inventory until two. He is not as puffy in the face now, but he has a lot of bruising and he says it is getting him a lot of sympathy. As usual, he is playing it for all it's worth!

January 9, 1995

The good news of the week is that Tim made the ball team! He had an intense and stressful week with practices every night. He got home about suppertime and we would ask him how he did. His reply each night was the same, "I don't know how I



could have done any better.” He was right at the top with all his stats and even made 9 three point shots in the allotted minute. He really felt blessed. The official posting was today. He called from school to tell me he made it and to ask if it was still okay if he and his friends used Lucas’s razor to give each other a close butch haircut to celebrate making the team. We had already talked this over for several nights last week and I agreed to let him if he didn’t shave his head. I guess he had already talked to the deacon’s advisor and asked if he could still pass the sacrament if he had a new hairdo and the advisor had told him it would be alright. Anyway, he called from Lucas’ after the ceremony and said that he didn’t look as ugly as I had told him he would and that he hoped I like it. We shall see....

Paul completed his scholarship forms and we mailed them off express last Wednesday. What a relief! He really worked



hard on it and I felt like he represented himself well. Mike has three we are working on this week and both he and Paul have been very pleased with the letters of recommendation they’ve received from their teachers. One of Mike’s favorite teachers is Mr. VanOrden and yet he wasn’t going to ask for a letter from him because he is a little strange and Mike was worried that he wouldn’t write an acceptable letter. I encouraged him to request one and if he didn’t like it, he could use some others that

he received. Mr. Van Orden’s was such a wonderful letter that Mike is having him do several other similar projects for him and is delighted with the results. One sweet thing he said was, *“I have taught school for 30 years and I can say that Michael Larsen is in the top 1% of all the students I have ever taught.”* Pretty good recommendation. It has been a very positive experience for Mike and Paul whether they get any money or not.

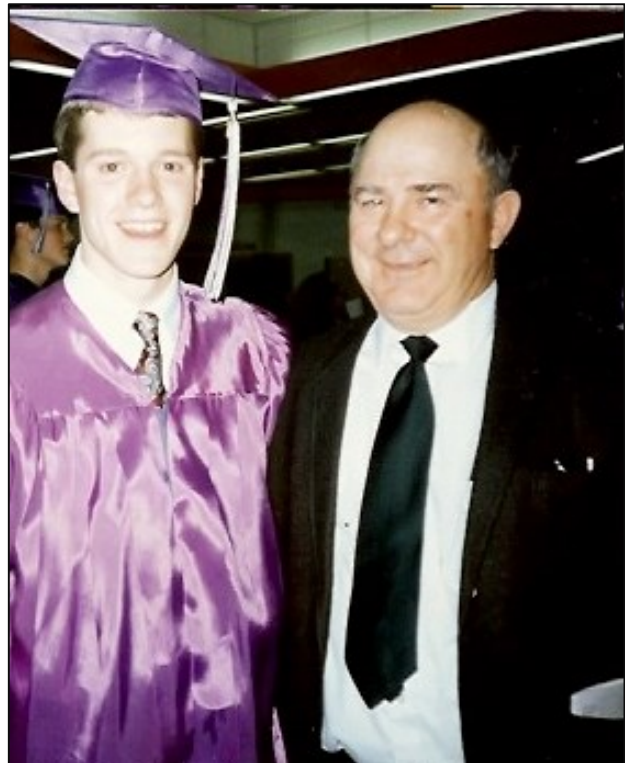


Daddy had a horrendous schedule last week but when all was said and done, his visitor from the Development Office was pleased with everything including the seminars and dinners and especially the appointments that Daddy arranged for him. I think it gave Daddy a boost and encouragement that he is on track. It was nice to have Friday night and Saturday to take care of home things. One thing we did was to attend our monthly genealogy-users group meeting and ask a few questions regarding the project we are tackling. We printed out Grandma's disk and now we are going to get names ready for temple work. I have been on the phone with Mom and I am beginning to catch on. Daddy is wondering where to begin with his line and needs to do some investigative work. We have about 15 years before mission time and this is a good time to start.

Last night I had a special practice for Steve's priest quorum here. They have been asked by Doug Cox to sing at his mission farewell this week. They are singing "Army of Helaman." There were 12 of them. What a beautiful sight (and sound) to hear that handsome bunch of priests sing harmony and realize that within two years most of them would be in the mission field! I am excited for them to get to perform in sacrament meeting; I think it will be very touching.

Grandpa and Grandma Larsen left for Boise Thursday and attended the Governor's inauguration and inaugural ball. It is the first Republican governor in 24 years in Idaho!

Tonight Mike and Paul are at a Quiz Bowl tournament in Malad, Tim is at basketball practice, and Daddy isn't home from work yet. SaraKay and I are keeping the home fires burning (literally). We had a beautiful snowfall Saturday and today we are having a January thaw and there are puddles everywhere. Last week the Rexburg area had a tragedy. Eight cousins, who attended



their grandmother's funeral the day before, were going sledding and came to an icy intersection. The driver was unable to get the van stopped and it pulled out in front of a large semi truck which hit it broadside, pushing it and crushing it against two pine trees. Five of the cousins were killed instantly, another one later and two remain in critical condition. Three were from the same family. One of the boys was the 6'6" center on Sugar City's high school team and student body president. Three were students at Ricks College. It has been a sobering week in the entire southeast Idaho area as we all mourn for their families. You just never know what's ahead. Enjoy each day.

[Dad] Well, I am pleased with the accomplishments of last week. Not only did I get the Council newspaper, Teton Trails, published and distributed, but I had an extremely successful two days of appointments, seminars, and visits with a couple of regional endowment people from BSA. We were able to touch 24 key donors or professionals (accountants, attorneys, bankers, etc.) many on a one to one basis

as well as conducting a training seminar for the professional BSA staff of the council. I burned the candle at both ends to get it done and I couldn't have finished everything off if it hadn't been for help from Sue and the family. When we pull together we can accomplish miracles!

I finally was able to finish the shelf for Sue and get it hung. It really does look nice. We are all proud of the job Tim did on putting it together. This week is the ward snow party that looks like it is going to be without snow the way everything is melting.

I wanted to share some information from Bruce R. McConkie regarding conversion and testimony. *"What is conversion? It is just as simple as the meaning of the term. Conversion is to change something from one state into another state....The Holy Ghost does two things in particular. On the one hand he is a witness to truth, and so*

he bears the testimony of the truth, and that is how we get a testimony, by revelation from the Holy Ghost. But on the other hand the Holy Spirit is a sanctifier, and he has the power to cleanse and perfect the human soul, to wash evil and iniquity out, and to replace it with righteousness. And that is the occasion when we are converted. We are cleansed from sin and are born again and become converted to the truth when we get the constant companionship of that member of the Godhead, that is, get the right to the constant companionship. Nobody actually has that companionship all the time, because no one is perfect, no one lives in the ideal and perfect state. We do the best we can, and get sufficient of the companionship to have our sins burned out of us as though by fire. And that is what is involved when we use this expression, the baptism of fire, meaning



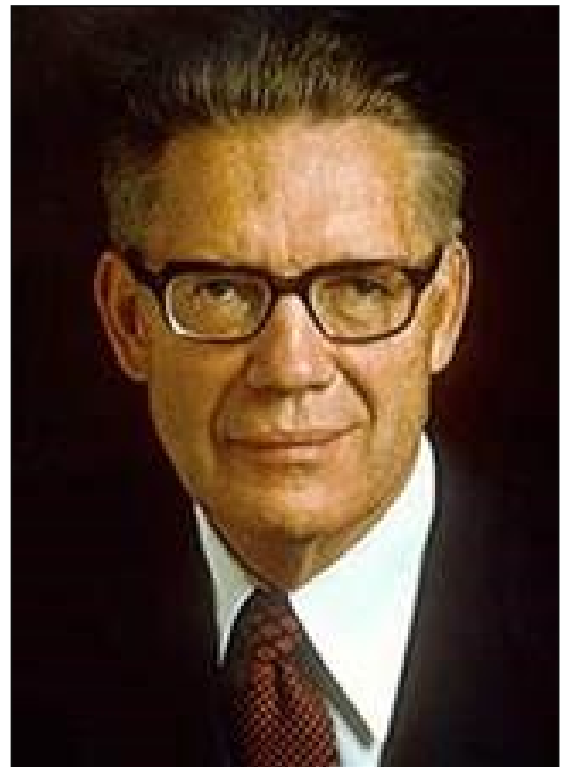


the baptism of the Holy Ghost. That is a symbolism to mean that dross and evil are burned out of the human soul as though by fire, and as a consequence the individual becomes a new creature of the Holy Ghost as Alma explained. So you become a new creature. There has been a conversion. In the past you walked after the manner of the world, but now you walk as becometh a saint of God."

January 16, 1995

Today is King Martin's birthday and it has been a productive day. (Last week Katie came home from school and told Stephani there wasn't going to be any school on Monday because it was "King Martin's birthday.") My work is going well—I just can't keep up and do everything I would like to do. Last week end was the first staff development weekend with the new Wood Badge staff. What a trove of wisdom, experience, and spirituality! It is going to be a joy to be associated with that group of 17

men. Our biggest job is to get participants signed up for the course. So if any of you know of anyone that can spare a week in



June for one of the leadership training courses, let me know.

My church job is still very satisfying. I really do enjoy the boys and revel in relating with them and teaching them. Hopefully I can be an influence for good in their lives. The Explorer team is incredible in basketball. We have games scheduled up through the middle of March when the stake and regional tournaments are. We play every week and sometimes two games per week. It is fun to watch Paul and Mike play. It was a real thrill to have 18 boys sing "Army of Helaman" at Doug Cox's farewell yesterday.

Rena Pederson wrote in the Dallas Morning News that *"Our nation is only as strong as the boys we prepare for manhood."* I am impressed with the strength of many of the boys we are raising and have great confidence for our country's future. Socrates, whose wisdom resonates out of antiquity, espoused a truth just as urgent today as when he wrote it 2,400 years ago: *"No man goes about a more godly purpose than he who is mindful of the right upbringing not only of his own, but of other men's children."* What a divine purpose we are a part of, who works with children and youth!

Let me share some thoughts with you on taking control of your life. If you want to be more successful and feel better about yourself, you might want to consider these suggestions: *"Start a success drawer—a place to keep letters, notes and cards from customers, colleagues, loved ones, friends and family. When you find yourself reacting to something that causes you to focus on*

negatives, read some of these materials.

**Place a Post-it note in your car with a plus sign on it. This will remind you to concentrate and think about positive things. *Place another Post-it note with a plus sign on it on your refrigerator or mirror in the bathroom. *Start your day by asking these questions: What am I happy about in my life right now? What am I proud of in my life right now? What am I excited about in my life right now? What can I do today to help someone? Our theme song should be, "Scatter sunshine, all along the way. Cheer and bless and brighten every passing day."*



[Mom] I appreciated Daddy's comments about the musical number in sacrament meeting Sunday. I had practiced with 11 priests the Sunday before and worried about our performance most of the week. We were to practice again Sunday morning at 10:30 and I hoped to work out the bugs. At 10:30 the boys began to arrive. It was then that Doug began to name the friends that he had invited to sing with us. I began to hyperventilate and wished we were performing a well-known hymn instead of a sheet music variation of "Armies". When all was said and done, 18 boys took the stand to perform the number. Though the



Paul and Mike have parts in "Music Man" and have begun practices. It is going to be a very exciting production. Mike is handing in three scholarships this week including the big Elks' one and then he will only have about three left to complete by the end of February. It has been a major effort for both of us and I will be grateful to have it completed. Now for Pell forms.

audience thought it was inspiring, I was totally unnerved! I should have learned my lesson the last time we pulled together a youth group. I practiced with six Merrie Miss girls and the morning they performed, eleven sang! Maybe I'm too old to be working with youth.

Our choir practice was poorly attended thanks to the 49er's and Cowboy's game but I try to be patient with my members since they are so good to support the choir the rest of the year.

Tim had quite a week with basketball. His coach is a yeller and seemed to ride Tim all week about one thing or another. By the end of the week, Tim was exhausted from the stress of trying to do things the way the coach wanted things done. I was able to have a long talk with him Friday night and reaffirm to him that he is tough and can survive even if this particular coach isn't his favorite. The ninth grade coach, Neil Hillman, has long been Tim's close friend and fan, and Tim spent some time with him trying to come to grips with what Coach Anderson expects. It has been a learning experience. We have all made it a matter of prayer and last night when he got home from practice, Tim was much happier and felt like things had gone a little better. His first game is Thursday.

The other day when Mike and Paul returned from school they told me about an assembly they put on that had been well received. Mike had been asked to MC Jeopardy and he felt like it had been done so many times that the student body was getting a little tired of it. He volunteered to come up with something different and he concocted, "Critter Chatter". Each class had a member go on stage to represent them in the competition. Mike as MC would name an animal and the representative would give his or her best imitation of that





animal's sound. The student body got involved by cheering for their representative or giving ideas of sounds. Some of the animals that Mike had selected were: giraffe, Albanian warthog, wombat, tapeworm, sea cucumber, velociraptor, albatross, bird of paradise, and shrieking eels. I guess it turned out to be a real hoot and one of the funniest assemblies of the year.

The next day Mike's econ group met here to make a movie for their class presentation. We've had so many movies made here lately that I am about ready to put a neon sign out front "Larsen Studios" and charge admission for groups coming through. The subject of the movie was breaking the nicotine habit. It started out with a bunch of boys seated around our table playing cards and smoking. Then they filmed Paul sitting at his desk and said that this was Dr. Handy and he had come up with a marvelous solution that was helping people all over

America quit smoking. It showed Brian Monson knocking on Dr. Handy's door and then going in for a treatment. Then there was terrible yelling and screaming and pounding and then the door opens and Brian comes out without any arms. Several other patients give armless testimony of how effective the treatment has been for them and it then

shows this group of card players around the table again playing cards without any arms....using their noses to exchange cards. They embellished the scenes with music and, of course, got to use all the wild weapons they have collected over the years from their stops at Smith and Edwards on their way home from Salt Lake with Daddy.



I'm anxious to see what kind of a grade they get. I won't be surprised if they get an A.

Steve told me about a skit he did in his Econ class last semester at BYU where he dressed up in a trench coat posing as a "flasher" and pulled an A for his creativity. Life is never dull!

The count-down has begun for Becky's arrival home. People are starting to ask about her arrival date and the weeks are flying by. They asked, "What are her plans when she gets home?" and I give them the most informed answer I can come up with: "Who Knows!" We are excited about her return and look forward to the long talks and catching up we will do. John sounded so much happier in his most recent letter and we continue to rejoice in his service.

Grandpa Larsen called a few days ago and said that he and AlvaLu are enjoying their stay in Boise. He did not have any recent news about Jessica but Daddy is going to call Mark this week and we will report in next week's letter.

When Grandma Richards called she mentioned that Nate is struggling to find enough work to keep employed but is determined to stay in the tri cities area even if Hanford does lay off the 5,000 it announced. He was put on the High Council last Sunday and seemed pleased.

Aunt Deniece is going in for a check-up this week. She has been having headaches and has a lump on her neck at the base of her skull that is painful. She needs our prayers. Grandma Richards mentioned that the St. George temple president told the workers



that they should not hesitate putting names on the prayer roll if there is a need. I know that each week she and Grandpa put many of our names on the roll; I have felt those prayers in my behalf.

January 23, 1995

[Mom] I received a phone call from Grandma Ilene in regards to Deniece and Don's son, Bradley. Six years ago this week Grandpa and Grandma Richards were to enter the MTC when Bradley suffered a stroke. The doctors told Don and Deniece that they could do nothing for him and that most likely he would soon pass away with another similar stroke. I thought it was an act of faith on Grandma and Grandpa's part to move ahead with their mission call and to trust in the Lord to strengthen Don and Deniece. They thought that they would not have the privilege of raising him to adulthood. He has enjoyed six normal years and been an active and bright little boy. Yesterday in Primary, he passed out and went into convulsions. His teacher's husband, who was sitting with the class, picked him up and carried him into the hall where he regained



consciousness. They took him to Don and Deniece and told them he was sick so Deniece took him home, thinking he had a touch of the flu. It wasn't until later that day that she learned what had happened and they took him to the hospital. Today he is undergoing testing. He received a beautiful blessing last night from a stake presidency member. He was told that his mission was completed and that he had been sent to bring joy into the lives of his parents and family. Although this blessing merely confirmed Don and Deniece's own feelings, it has been difficult to accept and wonder what is ahead for little Bradley. I know they would appreciate any letters or cards and certainly need our prayers.

Daddy called Mark last week and we got an update on Jessica. She continues to improve although it is difficult to continue motivating her. She is aware and seems to recognize what is going on around her. She has been able to attend school functions, concerts, and church in her wheelchair. Mark and Rita are trying very hard to work with the school system and get some special assistance. It is difficult for Rita to

care for her 24 hours a day and continue to prod. They are hoping that integrating her into the school will be good therapy. They have challenged her to graduate in a year and a half with her class. It's a lofty goal. Mark commented that this experience has brought more love and concern into their family; good has come from it even though it's been very traumatic.

It is like spring outside today. Thank goodness we've had a lot of snow early in the year because January has been unusually dry. The kids went out to leave for school this morning, scraped off an inch of ice from the windshield, and then couldn't get the Hornet to start. I hurried out, got it running but they couldn't keep it running so

I finally drove them to school for their early morning meeting. This reminds me of when Steph and Shauntel were still home and they would have piano lessons at six on Monday mornings. Sunday night we'd schedule the week and then wonder how we would accomplish all there was to do.

Since last Friday Mike made a trip to Logan, had a date, Paul went to a dance, Dad and I chaperoned a high school activity, had a church ball game, Tim attended a slumber party and competed in a hoop shoot, we hosted two groups for musical number practices, attended a youth fireside, Sunday meetings, choir practice, basketball practice, and made a trip to Pocatello for pallets. Today I have a Merrie Miss activity, tickets to sell for Fine Arts, sponsors to line up for Jr. Miss, a marquee to do, a piano recital to attend, a ball practice for Tim, aerobics, and home evening. Our lives are full of good things!



Tim had his first game of the season last Thursday. He was the starting point guard and really performed well. I think he felt good about his efforts even though the team lost. The opposing team had a 12-0 record and was at the end of their season whereas we were at the beginning of ours and hadn't been in a game situation yet. We have two home games this week and then lots of away ones. He is one of the smaller players on the team and looks like skin and bones in his jersey. With his hair cut so short, his eyes look twice as big and he looks like he isn't getting enough to eat! Everyone in the family seems to be well and happy. Andrea is in Wyoming for a short visit with her family and David is finishing up his trimester. Steve is enjoying his new classes and continues working at the hospital. Randy is hard at it with school again, and Lindsay is trying to find time for work, family, church and school when he is not enjoying his new computer that does everything except the laundry and dishes.

Our missionaries seem to be doing well. I was grateful John wasn't serving in Kobe, Japan last week. I learned today that John William's son, Jared, received his call to Cambodia and that one of the Mortimer boys that is serving in a California mission,

speaking Cambodian, received word that he will be shipped to Cambodia to help open it up this month.

Becky will spend spring and summer in Provo. She wrote and requested a housing application; she and Sister Atkinson will room together. She'll be home in 39 days.

[Dad] Tonight Tim and Paul played in a recital at the Civic Center. I was so proud of them! I told Tim that there aren't very many 13 year olds that could play in a piano recital one night and then play on the school basketball team the next day. Our car ended up at Rupe's afterward so we had to buy a cone to get out of there.

Last week I finished off the paperwork and interview for my annual review. It looks like they still want me. I ended up with a "Significantly Exceeds" in my Critical Achievements and taking into consideration mode (team player, go the extra mile with assignments not on my CA list, attitude, dress). It has been a good year and a lot has been accomplished to build the Endowment fund of the Council. We are working on some very exciting cases that could result in significant gifts. We meet with the prospective donor's attorney this Friday with regard to one of the biggest prospective gifts in the region.

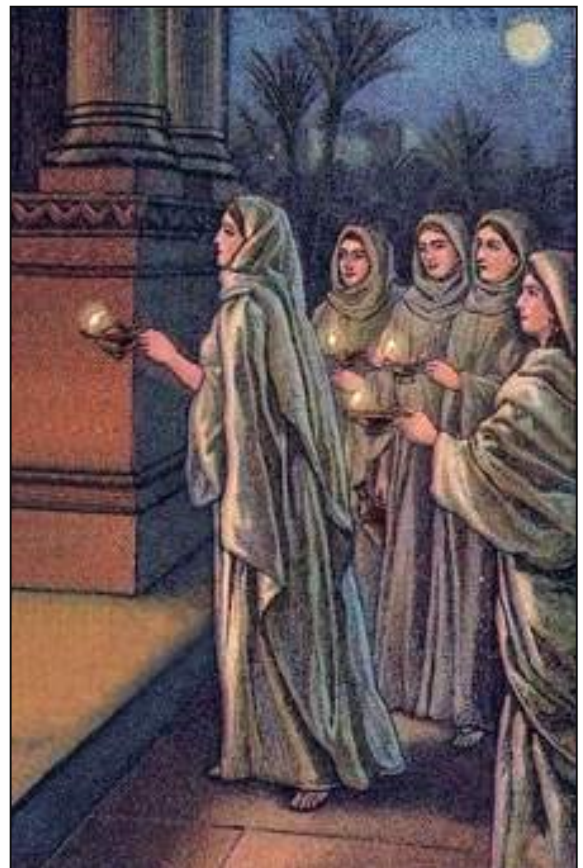
Last Saturday I had the opportunity of helping with a Relief Society Visiting Teaching Seminar. We had a reader's theater for which I was one of the readers. It really touched me. The message was about the Parable of the Ten Virgins and the importance of being prepared with plenty of oil for our lamps. President Spencer W. Kimball said, *"In our lives the oil of preparedness is accumulated drop by drop in righteous living. Attendance at sacrament meetings adds oil to our lamps, drop by drop over the years. Fasting, family prayer, home and visiting teaching, control of bodily appetites, preaching the gospel, studying the scriptures- each act of*



dedication and obedience is a drop added to our store. Deeds of kindness, payment of offerings and tithes, chaste thoughts and actions, marriage in the covenant for eternity—these, too, contribute importantly to the oil with which we can at midnight refuel our exhausted lamps.” I especially liked the last paragraph I had to read and felt the spiritual confirmation of its veracity. “As we ponder the challenges of repentance and preparation, we sometimes feel discouraged. How can we rid ourselves of foolish things and gain more of the wise qualities. It seems overwhelming. The answer lies with the first virgin—look to the light. Look to Christ. In order to become Christ-like you must know Him. When you know Him, you love Him and all else comes. As you know and love Christ you have no more desire to sin. You willingly give all your sins away. As you know and love Christ you willingly repent; you willingly take upon yourself the ordinances and receive the strength of his holy power; you willingly develop talents

and thirst for knowledge; you willingly and lovingly perform services in His name. Christ is the key, the source of the light. To know Him is to love Him. To love Him is to become like Him.”

Another choice experience was to attend the stake youth fireside last night. The ISU Institute has a group called Noteworthy. They put on a special musical fireside relating the Book of Mormon to common trials and showing how the answers are found in the scriptures. Through the faithful study of the Book of Mormon we can find the answers to the trials and tribulations of this life here and now. They were such lovely talented young people so full of the spirit and they really touched the people. Music has to be a celestial form of communication—heart to heart, spirit to spirit.



In sacrament meeting yesterday the Young Women presented the program. Sue led them in a couple of songs that really

touched my heart also. The strength of good, clean, faithful youth certainly gives me great hope for what the future of this earth will bring. Well, I love each of you and pray for the spirit to be a constant guiding influence in your lives—to keep you from physical and spiritual harm, to prompt you in ways to serve others, to guide your decisions, and to buoy you up through the tough times. DAD

January 30, 1995

[Dad] This week I had the opportunity of attending the funeral for my Uncle Ernie Elswood. Of my mother's siblings the only one left is Merrill. Ernie used to have a Hudson dealership in Idaho Falls about the time I was born and then a Pontiac dealership that he sold to the Harts. For many years he operated Elswood Trailer Sales on the south side of Idaho Falls. He had retired to Arizona where he and Goldie and their only daughter, Margaret, and her husband, Dean Corey, were living. They only have two grandchildren, one of which read the life story. The Church has never been much of a part of their lives and it was interesting to be a part of that final event for Ernie. Gary and I both felt that we should be there to represent the Barbara Larsen family. They appreciated us making the effort. We both felt that Mother may be there to welcome Ernie as he was released from his body. Merrill's son, Paul, lives in Shelley and has a sweet family. I think Gary taught Paul the lessons when he was a stake missionary while living in Firth. Paul has served as Scoutmaster and in the Bishopric and was an integral part of all the funeral proceedings as he was the closest tie to the Church.

Tim had two games this week and I was only able to attend the one on Tuesday. It is fun to watch him play; he is such a controlled and able ball player. He seems so big here at home but is short compared to many of his peer's on the ball floor. I

also was able to meet with the representative from Trails End and complete a report on last year's Popcorn Sale.

Thursday night was the Council Executive Committee and Executive Board meetings. Thursday morning Brad asked me to come up with some kind of nondiscrimination statement for the Pocatello United Way. A "religion free" family in Pocatello had written a formal request to the United Way to quit funding us because of our position in regard to belief in God in order to register as a Scout. It was somewhat of a shock to find that BSA didn't have a statement. So after a great deal of research, I was able to pull together a statement that was passed by the Executive Committee.

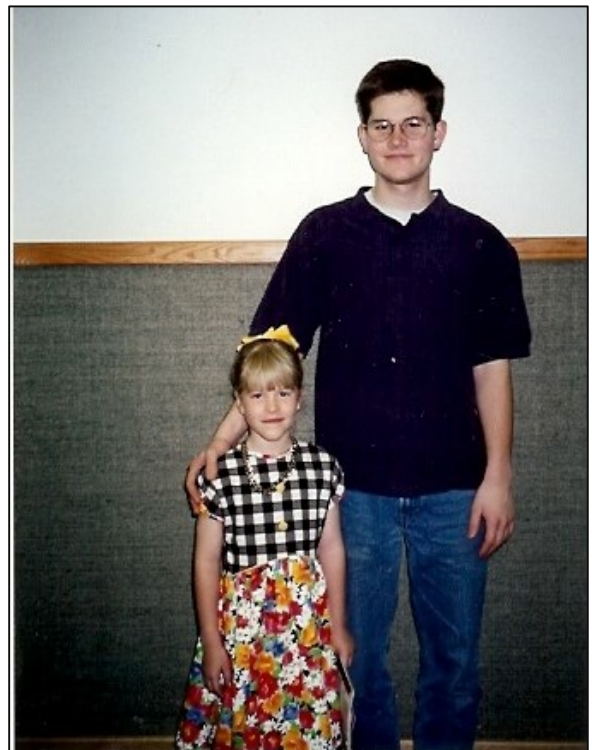
That statement basically gave background information from the Charter passed by Congress in 1915, the Bylaws, and the Rules and Regulations of the BSA showing how open we are to any individuals who meet the age requirements for the group they are signing up for and who are willing to subscribe to a declaration of religious principle, which acknowledges a duty to God, and who agree to live by the Scout Oath and Law. Most of us were amazed at how strong the declaration of religious principle is. *"The Boy Scouts of America maintains that no member can grow into the best kind of citizen without recognizing an obligation to God. In the first part of the Scout Oath, the member declares, 'On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law. The recognition of God as the ruling and leading power in the universe and grateful acknowledgment of His favors and blessings are necessary to the best type of citizenship and are wholesome precepts in the education of the growing members. No matter what the religious faith of the members may be, this fundamental need of good citizenship should be kept before*

them. The Boy Scouts of America, therefore, recognizes the religious element in the training of the member, but it is absolutely nonsectarian in its attitude toward that religious training. Its policy is that the home and the organization or group with which the member is connected shall give definite attention to religious life." In a recent court case where this right was being challenged (which BSA won), one of the judges said, *"The Scout Oath offers a clear statement of the beliefs, principles, and purpose of the Scouts, i.e., to nurture belief in God, respect for one's country and his fellow man, and being of good moral character. In order to maintain these principles, it is essential that the Scouts exercise selectivity. When the government, in this instance through the courts, seeks to regulate the membership of an organization like the Boy Scouts of America in a way that scuttles its founding principles, we run the risk of undermining one of the seedbeds of virtue that cultivate the sorts of citizens our nation so desperately needs."* Commenting on this court decision Rena Pederson of The Dallas Morning News said, *"Our nation is only as strong as the boys we prepare for manhood."* I am grateful to be part of a movement that has so much influence for good in the lives of boys and men and that is willing to fight for its right to maintain its founding principles. Love, DAD

[Mom] I just got back from aerobics and thought I would read the letter that Daddy wrote last night to get me inspired as to what to write. I tried to find his letter and finally called him at work to have him walk me through the process of getting it on the computer screen. His letter wasn't to be found. Apparently he must have forgotten to save it. I'll have to wait until he gets home tonight before I know for sure. That is going to be frustrating for him because he spent about an hour last night writing it. Let me recap a few of our last week's highlights.

Daddy and Uncle Gary were notified that one of Grandma (Barbara) Larsen's brothers had passed away. They were able to attend the funeral on Tuesday and Daddy commented later that he had wondered if perhaps Grandma wasn't there also. I often wonder about the relationship we share with those who have died. How much are they aware of our doings? Are they sent to usher loved ones home? It was a sweet experience to see some of Grandma's family again.

One goal I had set for my week was to go to the genealogical library and do some checking on the records that Grandma Richards sent. Tuesday I arranged for a sitter for SaraKay and headed to the library in Thomas. The people there were accommodating and I learned about the resources available. I think I'm finally catching on to what Grandma wants me to do. Daddy and I needed to get to the temple for January and between ball games, play practices, Young Men's activities, and everything else, we decided to go early Saturday morning. We were able to get in a session and be home in time for





Mike and Paul's game at 10:00 a. m.

Tim had two games last week. They won one and lost one. When they played St. Anthony, the first string made 20 points in the first two

minutes of the game and so the coach took them out and gave the other boys a chance to get in some playing time. The final score was 70+ to 20. Tim sat most of the game as did the other starters and he was rather upset about that but it helps him to feel how others feel when they don't see much playing time. It's been nice for Tim to have ball practice each night for 2-3 hours. He gets worn out and doesn't try to talk me into taking him to the church to play ball every night. Usually about 8 or 8:30 I will realize that I haven't seen Tim for a while and I'll find him lying on the floor or couch



fast asleep. I'll wake him, tell him that he's tired, and take him into bed. He gets up early to practice his piano and keep up with school work.

Yesterday Mike was sustained as the first assistant to the Bishop. One of the biggest challenges I've had with him lately is catching up with him long enough to get his input on these scholarship forms. We have one due Wednesday that needed an essay. He spent quite a bit of time yesterday writing it and then asked me to proof it. I sat down at the keyboard and began reading it. Daddy was sitting at my side, writing his family letter and giving advice on a few phrases. Pretty soon Paul got home from quartet practice and began giving tips on wording. I couldn't make corrections as fast as Paul was dictating them so I gave Paul my seat and he took over. I was really amazed at his ability to write and I so appreciated his help.



Paul is a tremendous young man and very organized in his private life. He has an

ability to focus on a task and see it through to completion. Saturday he wanted to take something to the Nelson twins for their birthday. I suggested that he bake them a cake and decorate it like Camp Little Lemhi since that was where he first met them. He came into the kitchen while I was finishing up dishes and got out a cake mix and began mixing things up. His cooking abilities aren't quite as good as his writing skills and at one point I commented to him, "Paul, in a year and a half you will be leaving home for college. And from the looks of things I'm going to need every minute of it to get you ready to go!"

Friday night our ward's priest team played our ward's teacher's team. We invited the Priests over for ice cream afterwards and the Bishop called to ask if the teacher's could join us since they would all be playing together anyway. We agreed and served banana splits to about 30 boys after the game. The priests really trounced the younger boys but they had excellent sportsmanship and lots of support from ward members, parents, family, and girl friends. We have such a sweet ward and lots of support. Daddy is relishing his experiences with these boys.



Grandpa Larsen got his sleigh sold last week. I spent part of an afternoon waiting for the buyer to arrive from Jackson Hole to get it loaded on his flatbed. Daddy arranged for the Lake's to help load it with their big front end loader if the fellow arrived within the prescribed time. When he arrived, I was surprised to see him look so rag tag. I followed him to Grandpa's to see that Bruce was there and everything went as planned. We had a minute to chat and he commented that he owns three ranches in and around Jackson Hole area. I commented to him that if things continued the way they are going, he could trade in his jacket for a pin stripe suit. Land in Jackson is so pricey. He feels a concern over what is happening and the loss of the peaceful valley it once was. I later read an article in the National Geographic about the situation in Jackson Hole; it was very interesting to read the statistics on how much farm land has been subdivided in the last few years and the effect on the old residents. This has been of interest to Daddy because this area is one of his prime targets for funding for the Council and he knows a lot of people who are very wealthy and concerned for the area. I'm sure Lindsay has quite a bit of interest in what is happening because of his attachment to his Grandfather's ranch.

[Dad] Becky is getting released in a month. We are looking forward to getting her home, although I'm sure that it will be frantic finding work and getting back into school and dating. Her welcome home will be March 12 at 11:00. We have been anxiously engaged in applying for scholarships for Mike and Paul. As he has gotten his references from various teachers he has been taken aback at the glowing letters he

has received. He has been accepted to BYU for fall semester and we've received word that both Becky and John have been reaccepted as well.

Paul has been putting extra effort into his piano playing this year and it is paying off. He does well and it is a thrill to listen to his practice sessions. He is hoping to get on at Kesler's this spring. I am enjoying having both Mike and Paul in my Priest's quorum. We talk a lot about what is going on with the boys and what we need to do. I have a wonderful bunch of boys and it is a thrill to work with them. We have both Explorer and Varsity BB teams because of the size of both groups. The Explorer team is excellent. They play well together and have a lot of talent; it is a joy to watch their games. Mike and Paul play prominent roles on the team and have really developed their skills. We have every intention of winning the stake and the regional tournament next month.

Tim was able to survive the cuts for the 8th grade team and has ended up being the starting point guard. He really loves his ball! It is fun to watch their team play. There is a remarkable amount of skill displayed. We are proud of Tim and how level-headed he is on the floor; he is a real play maker. He is doing well in his studies and just brought home a straight A report card for the last half of fall semester. He is a great pal to Sara Kay and is her 1st choice for a baby sitter. Sara Kay is growing up and getting ready for school. She loves to write, color, dance, dress-up, put on make-up, sing, whistle, and watch her favorite shows of Barney, Mr. Rogers, and Sesame Street. She has even been making up her own songs on the piano.

Sue keeps us fed, happy, and organized. She is still involved with the ward choir and keeps it growing. We had 62 members for our Christmas program. We are looking forward to a Stake Choir Festival and also performing for a fireside at the new stake

center by the Temple. The 50th or Jubilee celebration of the dedication of the Idaho Falls Temple is this year and they are having groups and choirs perform each weekend.

Work has been very satisfying. We are working on a number of significant gifts to the council that could meet or surpass my expectations of what I should accomplish before I retire. I have especially enjoyed working with Rick on the council newspaper and look forward to what we can do together.

February 6, 1995

[Mom] When I called Grandma Richards she gave me an update on Bradley. As some of you recall, the neurosurgeon that assisted when Bradley had his stroke six years ago, had advised Don and Deniece to put Bradley on some medication that would have altered him to the point that he would not be normal but he would have a chance to stay alive.

They chose, after considerable deliberation and prayer, to not put him on the medication and leave the situation in the Lord's hands. Now with Bradley's seizure, Don and Deniece were working with the same surgeon again, and from prior experience they felt he would not be very understanding of them and their faith. Grandma and Grandpa Richards knew of their anxiety regarding this doctor and really made it a matter of prayer for several days. When they met with the doctor, it was like he was a different person and he treated them with respect and concern. He recognized that some power higher than his knowledge had been at work in Bradley's situation and admitted that he couldn't explain why Bradley was still alive and normal. He said that the vessels in Bradley's brain had rebuilt although the tissue in the area of the stroke was dead and not supporting the vessels which could

cause major problems. He said that he would only operate if it was a life and death situation and that from Bradley's last good 6 years, he felt that they should just let it go until further problems signaled a change in his status. He said that if it was his son, he would just carry on and see what happens. The whole mood of the consultation was different from their prior experience and they left feeling at peace that the specialist had recommended to them the same course of action that they had felt they should pursue. For now, they will do nothing and see what develops. It was a sweet answer to fervent prayer.

Another prayer was answered for us today. We have been praying that Mike would be able to pull together the funds for school this fall and still have what he needed for his mission come January. Today in the mail we received word that he won a \$1,000 scholarship from Tylenol. This was one of the first scholarships we sent off

and it was a total surprise that he would win it since the numbers that applied throughout the nation were something like 30,000. I think they give out about 500 scholarships each year. What a wonderful surprise for Mike. He is in a little different situation than some of the rest of you since chances are slim that he will qualify for any PELL money. Stephani didn't receive any PELL her first year because we didn't know about it and she did a lot of going without until we realized that PELL was available. As I have filled out these scholarship forms for Mike, I have realized how much money we could have pulled in with the rest of you kids if we had only known about these other scholarships. It takes hours and hours of typing and I know I couldn't have done it with the other demands on my time back then. I know the Lord has watched over us over the years and helped us pull together the resources to survive. Winning this money has given me renewed



motivation to carry on and finish filling out the five on my desk that are due before March 1st. I got so tired and discouraged last week about it that I was ready to quit, but now I'll keep plugging along.

Not a day goes by that I don't think about each of you, your struggles and challenges, and the many mercies of the Lord to our family in permitting us this time of good health and success. I love each of you and pray each day for your protection from harm and evil.

February 14, 1995

[Dad] Happy Valentine's Day! After



shoveling off the driveway, taking care of SaraKay, getting Mike up and going, trimming roses while the others were at piano lessons, we had a good Valentine's

morning. Sara Kay is a little disappointed because she was hoping all her friends would be bringing her presents and valentines. Welcome to the real world, Sara Kay!

This weekend, Sue and I went to Salt Lake for a Scout recognition dinner for councils and executives that met the goals of balanced growth for the past year in Area II—which includes all of Idaho and Utah. It was a wonderful dinner at the Joseph Smith Memorial building and then we stayed overnight at "The Inn at Temple Square." We don't often get those idyllic moments alone. We were able to sit in the lobby of the hotel and listen to a fellow playing the piano on the mezzanine above us. It was wonderful.

The drive home the next morning was something else, however. We were driving in a real blizzard most of the time with treacherous roads, but thank goodness, traffic was light. The farther north we got the better the weather and roads. With ice and muddy slush frozen to the car and salty white everywhere, people wondered where on earth we had been. Then yesterday the storm moved into eastern Idaho and we received our share of snow.

Sunday night was the annual council Eagle recognition fireside and Tim and I went together. Jim Edwards, BYU's center was there and did a great job! He was raised in Boise and is an Eagle Scout and really was able to relate to the audience well. He shared a great message about setting and reaching goals. Last year there were 1,019 Eagles awarded in the council compared to 765 in '94. Friday night was Brodie Hanni's Eagle Court of Honor. It was a thrill to be a part of that recognition for him and to see quite graphically the influence of the gospel in the lives of Reed and Melanie and their family. Well, I have got to get off to work. I sure love each of you and pray for the Lord's continued

blessings of health and peace in your lives. Love, DAD

[Mom] We awoke this morning to a winter wonderland. I spent yesterday baking Valentine cookies that my Merrie Miss class decorated and then delivered them to some of the sick and elderly in the ward. Because of the snow storm, visibility was bad and the roads were very slick. As I approached one intersection, I slowed down to a crawl, but despite my pumping of the brakes we continued to slide right to the center of the intersection. I was grateful that no one was coming either way. Twice while making turns off the main highway, I slid and nearly ended up on private lawns. As we left one home, I realized I hadn't turned off my lights prior to going in, and the battery was nearly dead. By the time I approached Michelle Moon's driveway, she commented, "Just stop right here, Sister Larsen. Don't bother to go up my lane and get stuck or something". Then as I pulled to a shaky stop, she commented, "Let me out of this van of terror!"

Daddy mentioned our trip to Salt Lake. Originally we thought that we would go early and spend a few hours with Steve and Bonnie prior to the scout dinner. Then Daddy found out that he had Woodbadge training and an overnigher in Idaho Falls Friday night so we realized that we wouldn't be able to even leave Blackfoot until after noon and we weren't sure if there would be time to go to Provo and back by six Saturday night. Woodbadge went longer than we planned and we didn't leave home until three Saturday afternoon. With Mike and Paul in Boise, Tim was the babysitter and



he wasn't relishing having responsibility for Sarakay until ten when the boys were due home.

As we traveled to Pocatello, we began seeing cars covered with ice and slush and I commented to Daddy that something bad must be up ahead. It was strange because Blackfoot was clear and cold with no sign of snow or rain. By the time we got to Inkom, there was rain and by the time we got to Tremonton, the storm was bad. We



arrived in Salt Lake later than planned, hurriedly checked into the hotel, and made



a quick change and beeline for the Joseph Smith Building and the banquet. When we finally got there we both relaxed a little and enjoyed the rest of the evening. When we arrived back at the hotel following the dinner, we sat on a couch in the lobby and watched the young couples come and go. There must have been several “Sweetheart Balls” going on because the lobby and restaurant were full of couples in Sunday attire with corsages.

We were enjoying the music played by someone on the mezzanine on a grand piano when Brad and Dantzelle Allen (Daddy’s boss) joined us. We shared a long visit with them. They are such special people; very church oriented and very committed to furthering scouting. In the course of the visit, Brad shared some things with me in regards to a particular gift that is being pursued by Dad’s group. He gave Daddy credit and said how much good he is doing and how pleased they are with what is happening with the Council. I appreciated the sweet things he shared

with us and especially his comments that he felt Daddy had been inspired and that the Lord had been mindful of them in this one particular situation. I know that Brad, who is Dad’s junior by about ten years, relies heavily on him and many times shares concerns with him that he doesn’t share with other staff members. It is certainly a tribute to Dad and his abilities, to have such a close relationship with Brad and feel like he is appreciated and valued.

Mike included his account of their trip to Boise. The one thing he failed to mention was the

hectic but rewarding time they had building their cars and towers. Tim and Daddy kind of got pulled into the project before the week was over, too. It was hard to find time to complete the projects and have them ready for Saturday’s competition. One of their friends offered to let them use his shop and they spent two evenings doing that. Friday night Mike had to work but Paul



and Tim hurried home from Brody's Court of Honor and disappeared into Paul's bedroom. A couple of hours later I went down and found them working on several little toothpick towers on Paul's desk. They constructed one that Tim thought up as an alternative to Paul's ideas. It was a very sweet experience to see them trying to figure out the way to engineer and design the projects and then work together to make it happen. They were very disappointed they didn't come home with another calculator but they had a good time and have some ideas for next year.

Tim continues to enjoy his ball team and has two games this week. The annual stake Valentine's Dance is tonight for all three boys. At the court of honor Friday, Mike, Paul, Daddy, and Andy Davis sang "Like an Eagle". I got all choked up watching them perform together and realized that in less than a year Mike will be in the mission field. He, Paul, and Tim have grown close this last year and have shared some fun times that they will cherish.

Mike mentioned he was injured in his last game. He plays with a lot of intensity and I have been worried about injuries. He is wearing a brace to hold the knee and muscles and ligaments in place until they can heal. Hopefully he will be able to play with the team come tournament time but the doctor said he needs to keep away from rigorous play for several weeks.

A highlight of last week was the opportunity the kids had to do temple baptisms on Wednesday. Dad had to miss it to attend a banquet in Arco but the boys had a nice time. Our lives are full of good experiences. I am trying not to think about it but just for the record; 16 ½ days until Becky returns.

February 20, 1995

We have enjoyed a pleasant day today. This morning I awoke about 6:30 and tried to

remember what day it was and what I needed to do. When it finally dawned on me that there was no work for Daddy and no school for the kids, I felt a wave of relief and I turned over and went back to sleep. Our weekend had been a fun but hectic one complete with two ballgames, a volleyball tournament, and a Sweetheart Ball. We hosted Mike's group of eight here for dinner before the dance. We had a candlelight dinner and Tim and Brodie Hanni dressed up in Tuxedo shirts, bow ties, and cumber buns and played the part of waiters. They said such things as, "Please be seated until the rest of your party arrives" and "Dinner is served." They also poured the drink, served dessert, and ate the leftovers when the group moved into the living room for games. It was



nearly ten before we were done with cleanup.

Earlier in the evening as the table was set and Mike's mood music was softly playing, SaraKay came into the kitchen and sighed, "Isn't it wonderful!" She was so excited about the whole event that I let her stay up to see the fancy dresses, corsages, and



festivities. Things were so hectic for me that until she made her comment, I had not really thought about just how wonderful it was. But, she was right. It was wonderful to be able to invite this special group of young people into our home and to sense of their goodness and share in the excitement of the event. How fortunate we are to live in circumstances that permit such "Wonderful" times as this.

Paul and his group took their dates out to dinner in Pocatello so I missed seeing them but Paul seemed pleased with the evening. Last night several of their friends came by and practiced for their Salt Lake performance at the Concert Hall. They don't have Chambers this trimester so it has been quite a challenge to get their music ready without a daily class.

I missed Tim's game last week with Sugar City. When he got home he had us all sit down and give him our undivided attention while he went over the game play-by-play. He had three fouls in the first few minutes of the game so he spent most of the first half on the bench. Second half he played the whole time and at one point they were tied with only about a minute and a half left

in the fourth quarter and he was fouled and made both of his shots. They won the game and he felt good about his performance. They play Shelley this Thursday and then their tournament is next week. Becky will just miss seeing it by four days.

We received our first set of pictures from John in 18 months and we got quite a chuckle out of them. He had written a little dialogue on the back of each picture, such as "John at his

desk", "John with his computer," Elder _____ before going home for sickness," Elder _____ before surgery", "me doing the wash," and so on. I commented on how creative John was with his picture taking and Paul kept saying, "I want to see a picture of Taiwan, where's a picture of Taiwan?" At least we know that John isn't over there sightseeing and spending all his money on pictures of the countryside! On the back of two photos was this commentary, "The next couple of shots are of people I don't know; they just took my picture and then gave it to me." Inspiring!

Yesterday for sharing time, my group of Merrie Miss girls prepared a presentation on witnesses of Jesus Christ. They each gave a "Who am I" and dressed up to represent their character from the New Testament. After the children guessed who they were, they gave a description of a modern day person who also has witnessed that Jesus is the Christ. When we were preparing this in class the week before and I asked them to think of someone to represent, three of the girls said, "I want to do my dad. He knows Jesus is the Christ." (Michelle Moon, Amy Wray,

and Mandy Jenks). I was very touched by their response to this question and felt pleased that these girls could recognize that their own fathers could bear witness of the divinity of the Savior. It was a good presentation and went over very well—especially the costumes. Michelle Moon was dressed in a brown garbage bag that was tied on one shoulder and she wore sandals (John the Baptist). She was a real hit! They were all so excited about the presentation that I could hardly keep them contained for our lesson time.

Best close. Daddy is leaving tomorrow for Jackson Hole for a couple of days. It was nice to have him around for this long weekend. We're glad Lindsay is home in Bloomington and that things went well for Stephani in his absence.

[Dad] W. Somerset Maugham said, *"But whereas young people have it dinned into their ears often enough that they owe their parents love and duty, I don't know that the parents often have it impressed upon them that they likewise owe their children something too. They owe them, above all, a love great enough to permit them to develop their own personalities to the utmost of their capacities. That means that they must allow the ties of family to be loosened when they hamper rather than assist."* That is one of the biggest challenges of parenting—knowing when the ties are hampering rather than assisting, and then being able to loosen them a little. It is always hard to loosen those ties. It requires a lot of faith in the depth of assimilation of teachings and values and how the freedom will be responded too. Each child responds differently and the loosening has to be done in different ways. We are so proud of each of you and how you are developing your personalities to the utmost of your capacities. Your accomplishments and your individuality are a source of righteous pride for your parents.

Sue mentioned the volleyball tournament. It was the Blackfoot District portion of the Explorer Olympics. Four teams were all that were signed up, and only two were able to field a full team. So we ended up playing Thomas 1st for the right to represent the district in the Council playoffs this Saturday. I asked Randy Cox to come over and coach the guys a little and he was a great help. We were able to win quite easily and are excited about competing in the Council tournament.

I am collecting information for the next issue of the Teton Trails. I dread going through that again so soon. I hope it isn't as much of an ordeal as last time. Tomorrow I meet Perry Cochell, Regional Endowment Director, at Jackson airport and spend a couple of days with him in the Jackson area. If everything works out, this should finalize a major gift and get a few others moving. Last week I had to drive to Victor and back in a snow storm. It was pretty scary going over the pass from Swan Valley when I couldn't see the edges of the road because of the "whiteout".

I would like to close with a quote from Jesse Owens: *"U.S. baseball manager Leo Durocher's 'nice guys finish last' became the catch phrase of our culture. The world had by then been through two terrible wars, and too many people were brainwashed to believe that you can't be fair to others and still be fair to yourself. Yet the two are really one; many an athlete has found that out at a far greater price than I did. I'll never forget what one former star told me recently: 'I sacrificed sportsmanship, cut corners, didn't do what I knew in my gut was right. I thought it was the only way to beat out the competition.' No, you don't win anything by intimidation, manipulation, or unsportsmanlike behavior. The nice guys I've known have always finished first!"* Each of you are in first place in your respective races and are proving that nice guys can be first and stay

there by being honest, hard-working, caring, sharing, and going the extra mile.

February 27, 1995

[Mom] Daddy had a very successful time in Jackson Hole with the Regional Development Director, meeting with “the rich and famous”. There are some very wealthy people in that area and many of them have kindly feelings towards the BSA and the influence for good it is on boys. Daddy says he never has to sell BSA, he just has to show these people how their donations to the BSA will assist them in meeting their own needs as well as blessing the organization. It’s exciting to see what is happening. Brad Allen complimented Daddy on what he is accomplishing and reaffirmed that his job is secure.

Southeastern Idaho is having quite a time right now with the many job losses at INEL and the ones projected for the future. One of the CEO’s at the Site told Brad that the layoffs we have experienced these past few months (1500) are only the beginning. It has already affected the income of United Way and the projected dollar loss to BSA because of decreased donations from United Way is about \$30,000. It gets a little scary for everyone when a major employer like INEL makes such cutbacks. We are grateful for a good job and grateful that each of you children has good employment.

Today Mike and I sent off one of his last applications for scholarship aid and then we start on Pell forms. I will be sending off John’s housing application today. Just thinking about having three single students at BYU again makes me get butterflies. It is so peaceful with married students and so traumatic with singles. Not that I am pushing marriage, but life

does settle down a little for Dad and I when the kids marry!

The second trimester will be over next week and then we are on the home stretch. Paul is hoping to get on at Kesler’s in the garden shop so Tim can have the lawns again this year. Paul is also preparing for the ACT in April. Student body elections are coming up and he is thinking about that, too. Mike is trying to hold onto his 4.0 and be one of several Valedictorians for his class. Tim finishes up his ball season this Wednesday just in time to take part in the Church basketball tournament for the next two weeks. He came home from practice last Friday and organized a little get together for the neighborhood boys—a rousing basketball game until 10:00 p.m.



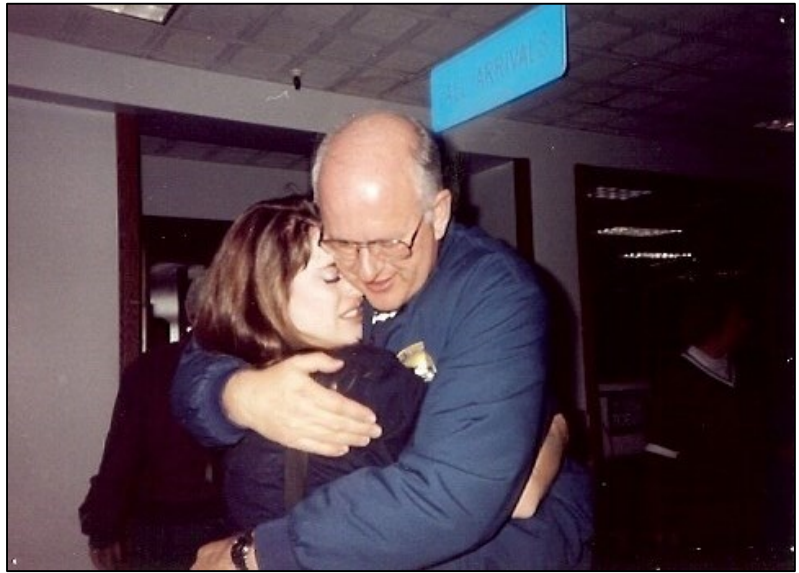
Tonight he and Paul perform at another recital. Paul is preparing for Crawford Cup as well as being involved with the play. Daddy had to back out of his orchestra involvement because he didn't have a single Wednesday free for the next six weeks and he had recognition banquets two of the three performance nights. He has really been busy.

I am invited to Aunt Linda's for a baby shower for Jennifer. She is visiting her folks in Rexburg and Linda is having a shower for her while she is in the area. Also, Miken and Lyman have announced their engagement; the wedding is the first part of June. They are going to have L. Tom Perry, who is Lyman's uncle, marry them. I'm hoping it will be in the St. George temple; that would give us another excuse to visit Grandpa and Grandma Richards.

I am sending the Larsen reunion letter from Uncle Mark. We are going to try very hard to be a part of it and want to invite all of you depending on what your situation is. We've got an exciting week ahead of us with Becky's return on Friday. Wish you all lived within driving distance and could share in her homecoming.

March 6, 1995

[Mom] It's quiet for a few moments and I thought I'd hurry and get this finished up. Daddy left this morning for a staff meeting. He is finalizing the newspaper for another issue and busy finishing that project. Last week his back started hurting him and before he was through, he had to call and get some medication. He isn't sure whether stress caused it or it was a result of his visit a few days before to a podiatrist who looked at his injured foot and bound it up with tape until an insert can be made to help his heel. This heel problem has been



going on for several years and he has got to get it resolved so he won't hobble around every time he does something physical and is on it for any length of time. He is too busy to put up with it. The doctor bound the foot and Daddy was compensating for the different feel and he thinks he threw his back out. He is doing a little better today.

Despite his discomfort, he made our anniversary special by doing lots of projects around the house that have been pressing and also taking me to a movie and dinner. "Little Women" was not at any theatre so we saw "Clear and Present Danger" and would recommend it to all of you. Exciting!

Tim's team lost the championship game by five points in OT last Thursday. Paul and Mike videoed it and added some commentary. We came home afterwards and watched it again and laughed at the commentary and tried to get Tim to feel a little better about it. The next day about noon I got a call from Tim. He said he was having a bad day and couldn't shake off the sick feeling about losing the championship. It made me realize just how much it meant to him and how disappointed he was with the outcome. He had a good season, though, and was one of the fortunate ones who saw a lot of playing time.



The kids came home early Friday to go with us to the airport to get Becky. I tried all week not to think about it because I knew time would drag if I dwelt on it too much. Friday finally arrived and we had a wonderful time welcoming her home. She was pleasantly surprised when she arrived in Salt Lake to see Steve and Bonnie and Rachel and also Aunt Kathy. She got in some good visiting time with them and enjoyed seeing Rachel for the first time before boarding the plane for Idaho Falls. It was nice to have most of Friday, uninterrupted, to visit and let her express her feelings about her mission.

Saturday night she had a date to go with some students from ISU and this morning she is with Clark Goodworth. Many of these boys need to resolve things with her so they can move on with their lives. She also has volumes of papers to organize, pictures to put in albums, clothes to sort through, shopping to do, and jobs to apply for. I am trying to stay out of her way and let her get her

work done. I guess if she has survived the last 18 months without me she can pretty much handle her own affairs now. She looks good and is anxious to be about her business. Everyone in the ward was delighted to see her and many went out of their way to visit with her and inquire about her mission and future plans.

It was announced yesterday that our ward will be split next Sunday. They are taking Moreland 6th, Riverside 1 and 2, and forming a Riverside 3 ward. I know that we will not be affected too much by the change

since President Bowman asked me to handle the music and a combined choir for the meeting and also shared some information with me about the new boundaries. I will lose about 15 choir members.

We will be hosting Becky's open house next Sunday. I wish all you kids could, "Hie to Moreland in a twinkling of an eye" and join us. If all goes according to plan, we will leave the 14th to go to Salt Lake for Mike and Paul's concert and then SaraKay, Becky, and I will stay the night with Steve and Bonnie, take care of scholarships, housing, and Pell business, and then





continue on for a day in St. George with Mom and Dad. Part of that same week Paul and Mike will be on tour to Utah so I guess Tim and Dad will be on their own.

I've wondered if John will have a hard time knowing that Becky is home and he isn't. Probably not. These last few months are usually a rewarding time for a missionary especially when they are feeling more secure in the language. I sent off John's housing and had mixed emotions about making that decision without his input. He

will be rooming with all his good buds from Heritage Halls his freshman year.

My emotions are on a roller coaster. Some days I think I can't take another pressure and other days I lament that soon the house will be empty. SaraKay is reveling in having Becky home and she has been her shadow. When Becky blows her hair dry, SaraKay comes up and blows her hair. When Becky plays the piano, SaraKay runs in and plays

the piano. We bought SaraKay some play makeup for Christmas and she loves to sit on the bar and put it on. Yesterday she got a little carried away with the lipstick and eye shadow and I told her that I thought she had too much on—that she looked like a clown. She quickly replied, "I don't look like a clown, Mama—I don't have any balloons."

[Dad] It's hard on me to feel like I don't have a few minutes for this little bit of

communication with you. Things have been hectic for me lately and I don't see any letup. Most of this week will be taken up with getting the "Trails" finished up and sent out. I

I enjoy working with Rick on this project but wish we could pay him more. It would also be easier if we didn't have to edit everything anybody else wants in the paper. There aren't many people who can



write clearly and correctly.

My Explorers took 4th place in the Council VB playoffs. We are in stake BB tournament and the Explorer District BB playoffs start this weekend. They are good boys. I hope we aren't overdoing it. Yesterday it was a thrill to have Becky come in to the priest's quorum and talk about missionary work. You can tell what a powerful missionary she was!

I had the privilege of presenting an Eagle award to another Stephen Larsen last Friday. It is a thrill to see what that means to people. A friend of mine said, *"My mother put a poster above my bed before I could read on which was printed a list of words. Mother told me that the heading said, 'Twelve Rules for a Real Boy' and she taught me to give an account to the Lord each day in my prayers of how I had practiced these rules. The list turned out to be the twelve points of the Scout Law and I believe they embody the family values our government finds so hard to define."* I am out of room, but I just want each of you to know how much I love you and how often I think about you and all the challenges you are coping with today. I know the Lord will truly bless you and strengthen you to be equal to the tests you face. Love, DAD

March 13, 1995

The last few days have been a whirlwind. Thursday morning I got a call from

President Clements asking if Becky could report her mission to the High Council that evening. She was substituting Thursday and Friday at the high school but I thought she would like to get that done before her mission was too much in the past so I told him yes and we accompanied her. It was very sweet to hear her report and also have a chance to respond. Friday and Saturday were spent preparing for the weekend's Homecoming. Since we didn't have a lot of family coming, I suggested to Becky that she invite her old roommates to spend Saturday and Sunday with us. They were delighted with the invitation and arrived Saturday afternoon.



Saturday morning the boys had another tournament game, won, and will play for the stake championship this Friday night. They are also involved with the Explorer Olympics and will have a series of games this week to decide the championship on that. Their experiences playing basketball have been very rewarding and they have tremendous pride in their team.

Paul and Mike left this morning for their Chambers tour to Salt Lake. They were both very excited! They have done this for three years now and we have never been able to be with them so this year we are

going to go and see the performance. Kathy and Dick and Bonnie are also going to join us.

I failed to mention that we received word that Jennifer had her baby 7 weeks early and it weighed only 3 1/2 pounds but seems to be doing fine. The baby will be in the hospital for about 6 weeks. Alva Lu had a sick spell last week with the flu. She got some antibiotics from the doctor and is finally starting to feel better just in time to get loaded up and head home from Boise. This session is out a lot earlier and it will be nice to have Grandpa and Grandma back in Moreland again. We were sad that neither grandparent could be to the "welcome home" but understood why. Becky is looking forward to spending a day in St. George with Grandpa and Grandma Richards this week. She is meeting two of her converts in Provo tomorrow, taking care of housing and scholarships, and Wednesday will interview at the MTC for a job. After a quick trip to St. George, she, SaraKay and I will spend Thursday night with Steve and Bonnie and then head home. Becky needs to be in Logan for Sister Atkinson's homecoming and then to Salt Lake on Monday to go through the temple with another convert, Linda. Tuesday she is scheduled for foot surgery and then hopefully things will settle for a



while.

An interesting phenomenon we saw when Becky got her call to serve was that many of the boys who had been dating her went out of their way to let her know that they were interested and wanted to keep in touch. This they did. While she was gone, they got involved in various relationships. Now that she is back, they are checking back and trying to press her for an answer so they know whether she will figure into their future plans. She appreciates their interest, but to be so bombarded so early

has been very difficult and unsettling.

Steve is carrying such a heavy class load as well as working long hours at the hospital; he needs our prayers, too.

Yesterday for the homecoming all of Nate's married children and their spouses came. Keith and Maggie came Saturday and so that night we had a big session playing Trivia and





Anybody's Guess. It was so fun.

Sunday Gary and Linda and family including Garon and his new bride and Dwight Wray, and Brent Hall and a roommate, and many of Becky's close high school friends joined us for dinner. I served the traditional brisket dish with salads. I felt very satisfied with the wonderful crowd at the meeting and the beautiful report that Becky gave. The dinner went as planned and by our 2:30 hour we had pretty much wrapped things up and were ready to go to the stake meeting for the division of our ward. We gained no one and lost about 11 families to the other ward. I was grateful that our little corner of the world wasn't affected and that we can move ahead with the good people we have.

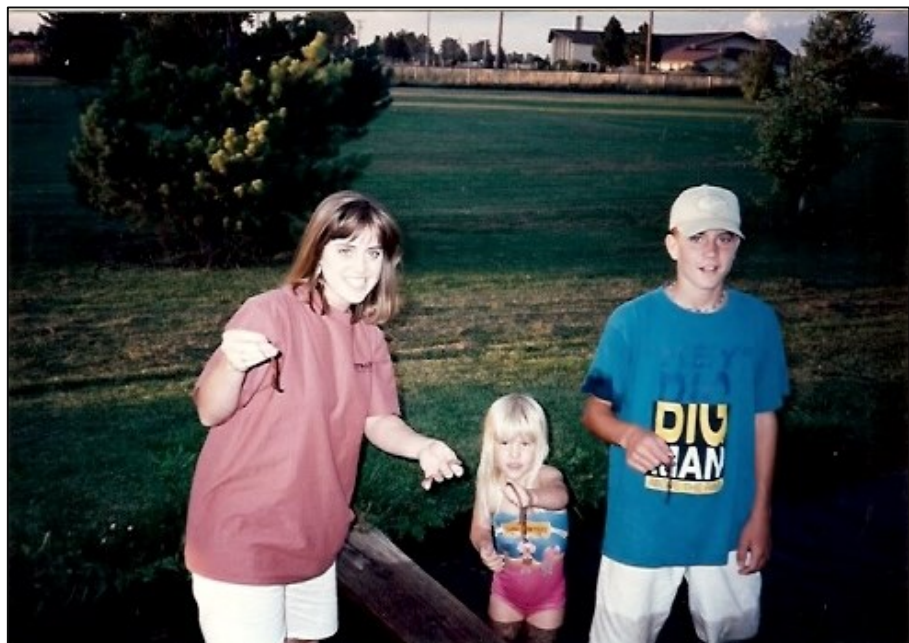
(Monday evening)
Tonight we drove over to get the Hornet from the high school where it was left when Mike and Paul left for tour this morning.

When we got home at 7:15 I said to Daddy, "Well, turn off the garage light and lock the door. Everyone is in for the night." Wow, what a lonely feeling to be down to four! Mom

[Dad] Last week was a real trial. My back was giving me fits and yet I had to get the paper out and that involved a lot of lifting and carrying bundles and tubs of papers. It turned out well and I appreciated Rick's expertise with desktop publishing to help make clean and accurate originals. Thursday, after getting all the bundles put together and labeled and ready to

be mailed, I took them to the Bulk Mail Annex in Pocatello and they were too heavy. So we decided the best alternative was to open each packet, take out $\frac{1}{2}$ of the papers and put them in another envelope with a matching label so every Bishop would get two packets of papers. It was tedious, but with some good help we got the job done and everything delivered and accepted this time.

This weekend has been somewhat of a marathon—especially for Sue. With all the



cooking, cleaning, and other preparations we have been going 90 miles an hour. We were really pleased with the way the Sacramento meeting turned out— she and I gave excellent 2 ½ minute talks and left a full half hour for Becky. We were pleased to have Gary & Linda and their kids and Rick and his kids as well as all the grown cousins that were here. It is times like this that we realize the loss of having most of you so far away and unable to share with us.

The phone has been going crazy with calls for Becky, mostly male calls. She hasn't had much opportunity to slow down since coming home.

March 20, 1995



[Mom] It's spring outside today...a little overcast, no cold breeze...and I hear the garden calling to me. But, first I want to relate some of the sweet experiences

Becky, Daddy, and I shared last week. It was such a relief last Monday to know that our guests were gone and I didn't have to fuss all week with food preparation and cleaning. Monday afternoon Becky left for Provo and had an opportunity to have supper with her favorite companion, Sister Yarborough, in Layton. It was almost midnight when she finally arrived at Steve and Bonnie's. The next morning she visited campus and took care of business for her upcoming enrollment, had lunch with two of her converts from Arkansas, and got reacquainted with Provo.

Daddy, SaraKay and I arrived at Steve and Bonnie's about four and enjoyed supper and visiting until we left for the Chamber's concert in Salt Lake about 6:30. Steve had

a meeting that he had to attend and wasn't able to join us but the rest of us had a wonderful time at the Abravental Hall watching high school students from all over



Utah and Idaho perform with an orchestra. Kathy and Dick also came and we were able to have some good visiting time with them. We sat at the back of the hall and I was able to entertain SaraKay without disrupting the concert. She fell fast asleep towards the end. During intermission we spotted a lot of Snake River supporters including the whole Godfrey clan who were in the balcony just above us. Following the concert, we were able to get some good pictures of Paul and Mike and their friends. We visited in the lobby for a while and then Daddy left to go back home and the rest of us returned to Provo. I was sorry that Daddy couldn't ride home with some of the other people from Snake River, but things just didn't work out that way and he arrived home about 2 a.m.

Wednesday morning Becky interviewed at the MTC. The interviewer knew both Steve and David and had high praise for them. He told Becky that they were two of

the kindest and finest young men he had ever known. That was nice to hear. Becky will find out in April if she has a job or not. Following her interview, we left for St. George. SaraKay was worn out from the late night and she slept almost the whole trip which gave us a chance to do some uninterrupted visiting. We thoroughly enjoyed our stay with Grandpa and Grandma Richards. They swapped missionary stories with Becky and I just listened and enjoyed.

Thursday morning Grandpa Richards left at about 4:30 to go to the temple and we left at eight to go through a session. We were in the session that Grandpa was conducting and that was such a special treat. All the temple workers knew Grandma and it was fun to be on her turf and meet so many of her close friends. Following the session, she took us on a tour of all the marriage and sealing rooms, the spiral staircase and other points of



interest, and then treated us to lunch in the cafeteria. That afternoon we left for Provo and had another long chat. Steve and Bonnie were the usual gracious hostesses and Thursday night we visited until nearly 1 a.m. It was fun to hear about what was going on in their lives and also get to play with Rachel. SaraKay absolutely adored her and nearly mauled her to death. She was worried all the way back from St. George that it would get dark and Rachel would be in bed when we got there and she wouldn't get to play with her again, but she did.

Becky had a date with Brent Thursday night and pretty much called things off there. Those kinds of talks are never easy but she felt that it was important to get it taken care of. We arrived home about 12:30 to find that Daddy had some bread cooking in the bread maker for us and there was

a beautiful floral arrangement on the bar that he bought for the living room. It was a sweet homecoming. The kids did well in our absence except for losing out in the Explorer Olympics on Thursday night. Friday night they played for the stake championship and won. This week they start into regional play. That is going to be very tricky since they have some long play practices this whole week in preparation for next week's performances and the two activities are overlapping. I personally am ready for ball to be over! It has been fun to watch this team play. They are close unit and willing to let each boy play.

Yesterday was our first choir practice with our reduced forces. It was hard to have so many gone from our ranks but I am going to start "beating the bushes" and fill the seats again. Daddy and I went to Grandpa and Grandma Larsen's last night and welcomed them home from Boise. It was so fun to hear them talk about Boise, their ward there, and the Legislative experiences they had. It is wonderful to have them back



and a part of our lives again!

[Dad] Mom has already hit most of the high points of the week. The Concert in Abravenel Hall was a beautiful experience. The orchestra played several pieces written by a Jay Richards (who accompanied the pieces on the piano) that were out of this world! I can't describe the ecstasy of peace they conveyed! It is always a delight when young people can experience excellence and this was no exception. The power and quality of their experience should be a lasting memory. The drive home alone afterwards went without incident and I felt like I was blessed to be able to stay awake and drive straight through.

We missed our women folk for those few days, but tried to slick things up and show them that we could take care of ourselves. The floral arrangement that Mom mentioned was one that I had started on at her urging made from the red barked bushes between us and the neighbors. I took them to Angie Williams and had her finish off the arrangement with dried flowers. It really turned out well and looks wonderful over the big mirror in our living room.

Saturday I spent most of the day outside raking gravel off the lawn, trimming shrubs, and pruning our apple trees. We had a full Toyota load of trimmings to take to the dump. Sunday Wilson Ellis reported his mission. He has really grown physically, mentally, and spiritually and gave an excellent report. Missions are such a blessing in the lives of young people!

I just wanted to share this one thought with you before I close. Key

players in any organization have 5 basic traits that identify them: 1) Sense of Mission—they believe totally in what they are doing. 2) Focus on Goals—they know ahead of time where they are going and are committed to achieve their goals. 3) Desire to climb new mountains—realize that current successes are temporary and are not satisfied; continue to reach for greater achievements. 4) Do not succeed on own strength alone—they recognize and understand that we are all dependent on others. 5) Have faith in one's self—they have core confidence and an inner strength of integrity, they get back up when they are knocked down, and exemplify strong leadership vs. management.

March 27, 1995

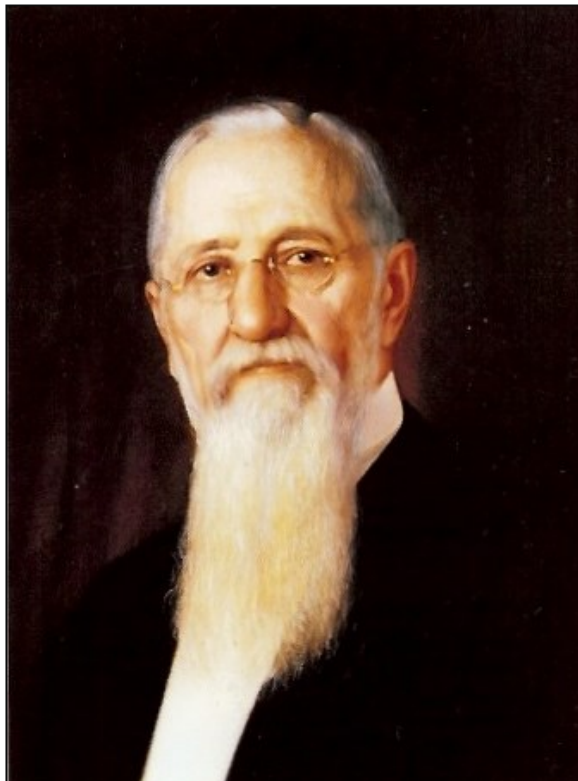
[Dad] Last night for home evening we had a pog tournament and even though I beat Tim in the first round, he came around the loser's bracket and he and Sara Kay played for the championship. Tim barely beat her for the #1 spot.

Last week our ward YM beat a team from Firth for the first game in our regional tournament. The only trouble is, we play our next game on Thursday night during the school play of Music Man. All but four





members of the team are in the musical and they wouldn't reschedule either one of them for us. Tim is hoping to be one of the younger boys brought up to help field a team Thursday night. Becky and I went over for a part of the dress rehearsal last



night and were really amazed at how good it was. Paul and Mike both do an excellent job on stage. The barbershop quartet that Paul is a part of is phenomenal!

I was involved in a Woodbadge staff development over the weekend and really enjoyed it. It is great to be associated with such good and devoted men. I am impressed with some of the new changes made in the course since last year—particularly the emphasis on reflection and the emphasis on Scouting as a “safe harbor” and how everything should be uplifting and building. No one should ever feel any threat physically or emotionally. It reminds me of Kendall Ballard's favorite statement, “Keep it praiseworthy.” I've been thinking

about a sacrament meeting program for the Aaronic Priesthood to present in May. My thoughts have centered on the mission statement of the Aaronic Priesthood and I would appreciate any ideas or suggestions regarding scriptures or quotes or music that would tie in with that theme. “*The mission of the Aaronic Priesthood is to: 1) Help each young man become converted to the gospel of Jesus Christ and live by its teachings. 2) Magnify priesthood callings. 3) Give meaningful service. 4) Prepare to receive the Melchizedec Priesthood. 5) Commit to, worthily prepare for, and serve an honorable full-time mission. 6) Live worthy to receive temple covenants and prepare to be a worthy husband and father.*”

As I was doing some research on Sunday, I came across this quote that I thought was sure a powerful testimony from President Joseph F. Smith: “*Now, my brethren and sisters, I know that my Redeemer lives. I feel it in every fiber of my being. I am just as satisfied of it as I am of my own existence. I cannot feel more sure of my own being than I do that my Redeemer*

lives, and that my God lives, the Father of my Savior. I feel it in my soul; I am converted to it in my whole being. I bear testimony to you that this is the doctrine of Christ, the gospel of Jesus, which is the power of God unto salvation. It is 'Mormonism'," With a heartfelt Amen to that, I will sign off and get to work. Love, DAD

[Mom] I have been battling my monthly headache all day and last night it was so bad I just gave up and went to bed trying to get some relief. Daddy took the kids to music lessons this morning at 5:30 and I slept in. I am feeling like I can face life again this morning.

While we were in Provo a couple of weeks ago, Steve mentioned that Bonnie's mother, Jean, and her sister, Cecelia were doing a mother-daughter presentation as a part of Women's Week at Ricks College this year and that Cecelia was also presenting a concert on many of her original songs. Steve said that Bonnie was going to help with the concert. I was already aware of Women's Week because Aunt Jeanie was flying in to attend the activities with Julianne who was being honored by the History Department as their candidate for Woman of the Year. I offered to tend Rachel for Bonnie if she needed the help but she said that her dad and brother were doing the duty and she said that she would enjoy having Becky and I come and see the presentation. We left here about 9:30 Saturday morning with Julianne who

had been down to visit Grandpa and Grandma for Friday evening, and we drove to Rexburg and attended the seminar at 11:00. It was such a treat! Then for lunch we went to Wendy's with one of Becky's Branson converts. At two, Julianne and Michelle DuBois joined us for the concert. It was about the different seasons of a woman's life. Jean was the narrator and many original songs of Bonnie's, Shannon's, Cecelia's, and Cecelia's daughter were performed. Bonnie and Julie performed several apiece. What a thrill to listen to the beautiful music and watch their sweet family perform. I was so proud of Bonnie! I wished that Steve and Daddy could have been there to enjoy it but I noticed Morris Benson was there with camera and tripod so I am sure they will be able to see a video of it. As I sat there listening to the sweet "songs of the heart" that afternoon, my thoughts turned naturally to each of you and the treasure you are to Dad and me. I kept thinking about the importance of relationships and how, when all is said and done, it is our relationships that we need to value. We all have many opportunities to form relationships, whether it is in the home, at school, work, or in our church service. I





know that these relationships can be a source of great joy to us if we work to make them meaningful and positive. The older I get, the more I realize that people carry heavy burdens and that my communications with others should be supportive and caring.

We arrived home just in time to send Mike and Paul off to their girls' choice MORP. Daddy spent all evening Friday and most of Saturday at Woodbadge and beat us home by a few minutes. Tim had pow-wow that morning and Paul had play practice; Mike had been at work and play practice so it made

for a full but rewarding day. Tonight I am accompanying Mike to the Elk's Lodge where he will be awarded his Most Valuable Student Award. He found out yesterday that he has just been selected as "Student of the Month" by the Elks. This week is a big one for us with the play, two Regional Scout Recognition Dinners, regional tournament and other commitments.

Becky had surgery on her foot last Tuesday. They opened up the foot, chiseled off part of the bone, filed it smooth, and then stitched it back up. She planned on working Wednesday, but the doctor told her to stay off of it for 48 hours and then to be very careful in what she did. She has been feeling so much pressure to be working and putting something away for school that the prospect of being laid up for several days wasn't a very pleasant one. She was able to come home and stay off it but the pills they gave her made her nauseated. She propped her foot up on a chair and worked for two days on her photo album when she wasn't sleeping. By Friday she felt pretty good and she got a call to substitute at Moreland. That same morning the high school called and lined her up for several days substituting for them. She was so thrilled to have work lined up and it





looks like they are going to keep her busy. She rides to school with the boys and comes home with them, too, so it is very convenient for us all. She is planning to take out a student loan so she can go full time spring/summer and finish up a year from now. She called the MTC and they said they would let her know the first two weeks in April if they needed her; but, come what may, she knows she will be Provo-bound May 1st and on her way to finishing up her degree. Little by little things are falling into place. I have been busy getting John's housing and registration ready for him since he will come flying in just a few days before classes start in September. Mike has prepaid some housing and is getting ready to register for classes. In the next two weeks, Paul has the school musical, regional tournament, Crawford Cup, ACT test, student body elections, Boy State tryouts, and music festival. That doesn't include trying to keep up his grades somewhere in the midst of it all. He has been feeling a bit overwhelmed but I remind him that we can just take it a day at a time and we'll get through it. He told me the other night that he hated to have me

picking up so many loose ends for him and I told him that I had done that for all the kids and I was willing to do it for him.

Last week Mike had his first Odell composition due and he finished it and asked me to critique it. I read through it and made a few suggestions. Then I said, "Why don't you just submit it the way you have it and let's see how he likes it." When he got home the next day, I inquired about his grade and he

commented that he had gotten his essay back and it had two big red marks on the page—an A and a +! Odell had even read it to the class as an example of the perfect way to develop a theme. That was good news for both Mike and me because that means I won't have to do much tutoring this trimester. Yah!

Let me encourage each of you to listen to conference this weekend, including the Priesthood session on Saturday night. I have invited Grandpa and Grandma Larsen for dinner on Sunday for Grandpa's birthday and we are looking forward to some time with them. Love, Mom

April 2, 1995

[Dad] I am leaving early tomorrow for a Staff Planning Conference in Sun Valley for 2 ½ days so I had better write tonight or it won't get done. This has been a full and rewarding week. One of the highlights of the week was being able to attend conference in Salt Lake with most of my Priests. We left Saturday at 9:00 with the intention of getting in line for the Priesthood session of conference when we



got there. Bishop Godfrey, Randy Cox, and I each took a van with 5-8 people in each. When we got there, my van load was in line while most of the rest went to the Mall. Paul and Mike got to shake hands with Elder L. Tom Perry and were invited into the session of conference. Paul came after me and we were able to be on the floor in the center section about ten rows back. What a thrill to be there at the feet of the brethren and to partake of the spirit of that session of conference. I was especially touched with the priesthood chorus from Springville that sang. But, because of that, we were too far back in the line to actually get in the tabernacle for the Priesthood session—we were shepherded into the Assembly Hall. But we were able to shake hands with Dallin Oaks as a consequence. Also, we were able to shake hands with J. Richard Clarke and Elder Michelson from Idaho Falls.

Later, on our way home, we stopped at Wendy's at Woods Cross and were able to visit with Elder Gene R. Cook as we went through the line after him and his family.

We drove home and were here by midnight. Today we had Dad and Alva Lu come for dinner because I wouldn't be around for his birthday in a couple days.

The school musical of Music Man is now over. The performance on Friday night was absolutely wonderful. Mike and Paul both had significant roles and did a wonderful job. I was impressed with the level of excellence exhibited by the large number of kids that were in that production.

On Thursday night we won our next game of the regional tournament. The game was delayed in starting until about 9:30 and so the rest of the team were able to get there by the 2nd quarter and played in their makeup from the play. Mike and Paul both suffered injuries but I'll let Mom write about that. Let me just conclude with an expression of pride that I feel with regards to the rising generation. You really are a select group! Love, DAD





[Mom] Daddy mentioned injuries from the game. Thursday night during the 3rd quarter of play, Mike went up for a rebound and came down on someone else's foot and sprained his ankle. We put ice on it to reduce the swelling and we all went to bed. The next morning Mike was so sick with nausea and dizziness that he could hardly get up the stairs. He could hardly touch his foot to the ground and we all wondered what he was going to do for the final performance of the play that night. I called Scott Hawker at the Fitness Center and he gave me instructions for minimizing his discomfort. Daddy suggested that maybe someone could put athletic tape on it for the night performance. I called Coach Wright at the high school and Pat Tiede was in the office and offered to help. Pat loaned us a "cuff" kit that inflates with ice water and fits over the ankle area. She called later and made some other helpful suggestions. She wrapped Mike's ankle before the performance and made it possible for him to go on with his part without a limp. I felt like it was a small miracle and that the Lord had heard our prayers.

Friday morning Paul complained about his foot but I was so preoccupied with Mike that I didn't give it any attention. By the time he had gotten through his day, the play, and a late night date, he was hobbling too. Saturday it was even worse and walking around on temple square and standing long hours in lines didn't help. Yesterday Paul spent the day in the chair with his foot elevated. It looked and felt worse than ever by night and today I am taking him to the doctor for x-rays. I guess the good news is that the insert the doctor made for Daddy's shoe is giving him some relief and Becky is nearly back to normal from her foot surgery. Mike said that he and Daddy and Paul were quite a trio walking around

temple square with Daddy on a cane and Mike and Paul limping. Hopefully basketball will soon be over and we can see an end to the injuries. They play again this Thursday and if they win they will be playing for the Regional championships.

The play was wonderful! I wish all of you could have seen it. Mike and Paul had fun parts and contributed their share to its success. Paul was in a barbershop quartet that performed several numbers and did a great job with some very difficult music. Mike played a loud-mouthed, obnoxious salesman, bent on revealing the Music Man as a con artist.

This is Marva's last year of teaching and it is nice to have her retire after a successful year like this. The school is in the process of interviewing people to replace her. It is going to be interesting to see who they get. I am sure they will host an open house for Marva when she retires and if any of you would like to drop her a note of thanks, I'm planning to go and would be pleased to deliver your note. She has been a big part

of our lives since Stephani got in Chambers in '82.

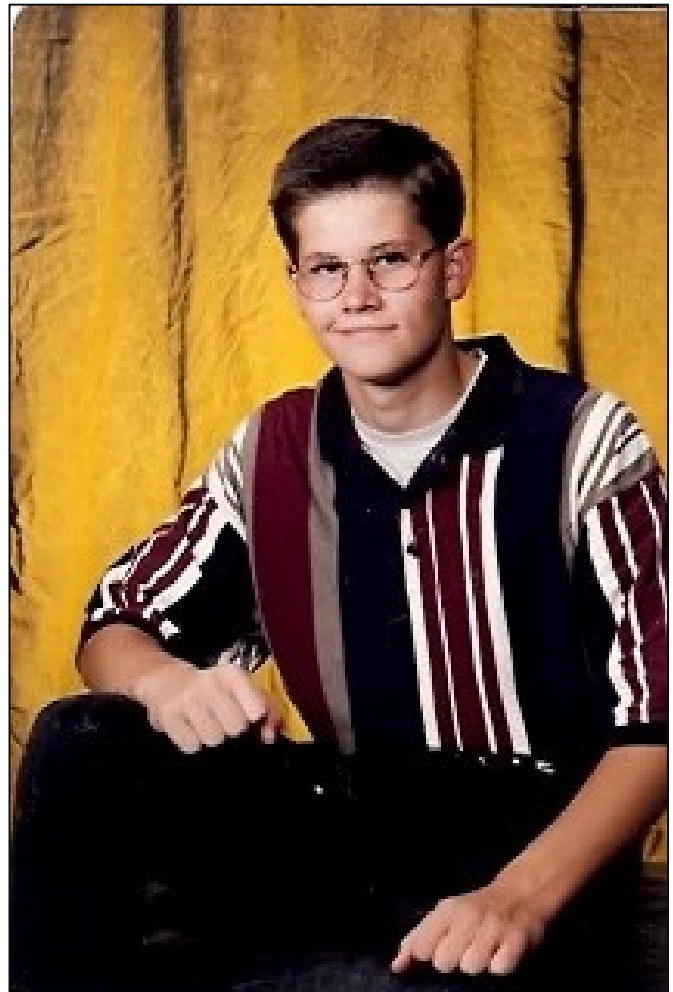
It has been interesting for Becky to return to Snake River High School after being gone nearly five years and experience it from the teacher's point of view. She is thoroughly enjoying substitute teaching although she is anxious to get into college again.

Becky and I accompanied Mike to the Elk's lodge Tuesday night where he was honored as the first place winner in the "Most Valuable Student" contest and received a \$500 check. Judge Brower was in charge of scholarships and he talked with me for a few minutes and complimented me on my "smart kids". He said he heard that Mike wasn't the first Larsen to win an Elks' scholarship and wondered how the rest of you were doing with getting your educations. When I told him that next year eight of you (including two sons-in-law and Jonie) would be in college, he about flipped! I have to acknowledge the goodness of the Lord in preparing a way for your schooling and also acknowledge you and your spouses for sticking with it until you get what you need. I know that it can get pretty stressful but it will be worth the price you are paying.

[Dad] Reading your mother's letter makes me tired as I relive last week. It seems like we are always busy, but sometimes are worse than others. I finally finished off our tax information and took it in to Layne last week. The night that I finished, Randy called with a tax question and he was just finishing up their returns.

One of the big events of last week for me was a staff planning conference in Sun Valley. We left Monday morning at seven and drove to Ketchum where we had access to facilities for our meetings and lodging, thanks to friends of scouting from Aberdeen. We had excellent meetings as we planned for 1996, worked out details

regarding camps and programs, reviewed enrollment figures and goals, and reviewed our finances and fund raising. Brad also had Boyd Ivie, the former Area Director, and his wife Merlene talk to us about the profession and spousal relationships. It was also fun to eat out at some excellent restaurants in Ketchum and Elk Horn. On Tuesday we rode bikes from Ketchum around the loop through Elk Horn and down to Hailey, and then from about 10 miles above Ketchum down to our meeting place—about 30 miles altogether. I sure handled that experience a lot better than I did the cross country skiing two years ago! There was still quite a bit of snow around and some places we had to stick to the road because the bike path had too much snow on it. We had a great home evening last night talking about the Atonement and the resurrection. The phone rang and Sara



Kay answered it with, "Larsen Home Evening" and they said they would call back later.

April 10, 1995

[Mom] This past week has been very busy. When we sat down a week ago to schedule our upcoming week, I wasn't sure how we were going to get through it and feel like we had done our best with each event. The regional tournament was in its final week and we had games Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings.

If we lost, we would play twice on the same night. Luckily, we continued to win and finally on Saturday night we played Moreland 2nd for 1st place in the region. They had an excellent team and beat us. They took first and we took second out of 24 teams in the region. We are relieved to have the tournament over and to see the good will and camaraderie that has developed in our priest quorum

because of it. Mike and Paul did their share to make it a successful season. Mike has been plagued with injuries and has not really given his knee or ankle time to heal, so now he's going to take it easy and try to get better.

Yesterday in sacrament meeting Greg Jenks was one of the youth speakers and he expressed some feelings about his stay here with the Bob Jenks' family. He lost his father in an accident about 2 years ago

and has had a rough time. It was a very emotional talk and most of the parents of the boys in the quorum and on the team, were very touched. Our choir was supposed to perform after his talk; it was difficult as half the choir was teary-eyed and sniffing. Daddy felt rewarded by his remarks because Dad's work with the quorum has really helped them to feel close. He said the spirit in sacrament meeting carried over into quorum meeting.

Paul competed in Crawford Cup last Friday night against 14 other pianists. Several weeks ago as we were discussing the upcoming events such as ACT, student body elections, and Crawford Cup, we decided that Paul should get a father's blessing to help him handle everything. With the elections and tournament, the week had been so hectic that we almost forgot about the blessing. Daddy and SaraKay were just pulling out of the driveway to go to the game when I remembered and had Becky stop Daddy and have him come back in. Becky was waiting for her date so Daddy and Paul and I came into the computer room and Daddy gave Paul a beautiful



blessing. He told him of the Lord's love for him and that he was pleased with his efforts to live the gospel and develop his talents. He also blessed him that he would be able to perform his number as he had practiced it and that he would be calm. I felt a sweet calm come to me, too, as I listened to the blessing. I had been so stressed with all the campaign preparations of the week, including a campaign party, trips to Pocatello for supplies, hanging posters that morning at

six in the school, and skit preparations, that I was pretty frazzled and needed the blessing as much as Paul. That night Paul performed his piece with as much polish and skill as I have ever heard him play it. As I listened to each number, I felt that Paul had done as well as anyone and was in the running. When the winners were announced, Paul hadn't won. As we visited with people in the commons after the program, several people went out of their way to visit with me about him. Linnea Hammond and Enid Williams both expressed how impressed they were with his performance and Linnea said that if Paul still wanted to take lessons from her, that she would put him at the top of her list. As we left the school for home, Paul confided in me that Janet Williams, who was in charge of the judges, said that he was the third place winner although there were only two recognized and his name wasn't announced. It was such a thrill for him to realize that all his work had paid off.

The next morning he took his ACT and then that afternoon he made a video for the

campaign today. After Saturday night's game, he helped Merritt get his video made, helped another candidate make their video, and then had a quartet practice for a number his quartet is doing for the early morning Easter sunrise service Thursday.

Mike is on the other side of things, arranging for risers, speakers, decorations, and ballots for the election and the delegate assembly tomorrow and the dance Thursday. He can't actively support Paul but has been an idea man for him and given lots of moral support. When we left at 5:30 Friday morning to hang campaign posters for Paul, I couldn't help feeling touched by Tim's willingness to help his brother even though he would have rather stayed in bed. He didn't smile about it, but he did it and has done his share of other projects to help Paul get through the week.

It has been fun for the boys to have Becky a part of their school events this past month. She has not missed a single day of work as a substitute at the high school and is really enjoying being a part of the school

scene again. We have had so many people tell us that their child told them how much they are enjoying Becky as a teacher. Becky and I have been working on loan applications, scholarship petitions, Pell Grants, and housing arrangements to get everything ready for her, John, and Mike. Sometimes it is overwhelming with all the details although I know "there is no other way". We are trying to find Becky a little car. Luckily her credit is good and she will have sufficient from her earnings these past two months to help her get into something of her own. It has been very challenging to





have so many demands with her savings depleted but she is working to get things lined up so she can be through at the "Y" in a year and employable. We found out that she could petition for additional scholarship aid for Spring/Summer and maybe get full tuition so we have made application for that. She has yet to hear from the MTC but continues to hope that something may happen there. It's kind of been a waiting game but we are moving ahead in faith.

Tim performed with three ensemble groups at festival last week. When his quartet got

up to sing, Carlos Baldwin started to laugh, then Shane Jenks began to giggle, and so he and Eric Thompson were singing a duet. They would stop and start again and then the boys would start to laugh again and finally Linnea told them to sit down and get themselves under control. When the other groups finished performing, Linnea gave them one more

chance and they made it through and got a Superior rating.

The most exciting thing that happened at festival, though, was that they stopped at the mall on the way home and Tim said he had a super big piece of pizza that even he couldn't quite finish! First things first! Tim always lets me know that although he is humoring me with taking concert choir, piano lessons, and performing with a quartet, that his heart is now and always will be with basketball. That's fine with me. I guess we have a good compromise and we both feel satisfied.



I will close today by telling you something cute Whitney Davis (SaraKay's friend) said the other day. She asked me if SaraKay could come to her house. She said that her cat, Max, had died and she wanted to show SaraKay where they had "planted" him in

their back yard. Mom

April 16, 1995

The kids are out of school today and we've had a very productive time. Daddy took the day off and he and the boys spent the morning getting the mowers tuned up, oiled, and running for another season. This afternoon he and Paul and Becky are in Pocatello shopping for a car for Becky. Becky and I hunted for one last week, but we decided that when a woman walks onto a used car lot and asks to see what the dealer has in cars that cost less than \$3,000, she "gets no respect". We gave up trying and decided to wait for Daddy to help us because we just couldn't assess what we did see and there weren't many to choose from in the first place. There have been so many details to take care of this past month to prepare for Becky and John and Mikes' upcoming year and we are on the final stretch with Pell Grants, loan apps, scholarship offers, and housing arrangements.

Mike received word from the "Y" that he has been awarded half tuition for next year. We were disappointed and I decided to call Derek Spriggs and plead my case. I told him that Mike had been told that

with an ACT in the high 20's and a good GPA that he would have good scholarship opportunities at the "Y". Derek was very sweet and said that he would take our petition to the committee head and reassess it based on our situation of numbers in college and returned missionaries.

Becky called the scholarship office and found that her petition had been denied because it would make a total of 9 semesters instead of the normal 8 that she had received assistance. I called again and reminded the counselor that we were told to petition because of her high GPA, prospects for graduation, and that her final semester was student teaching and a





teaching certificate usually takes more than 8 semesters. She said she would take it back to committee and see what she could do.

I feel like I am on a first name basis with everyone in the scholarship and financial aid office, but sometimes it is frustrating to be told one thing by one advisor and then told a different thing by another. Becky called her old boss at the copy center and asked if there was any way that he could use her for spring/ summer. Within 30 seconds he had lined her up for an 18 hour week starting May 1st. She has been waiting for word from the MTC but felt that she could wait no longer and decided to take the sure thing at the copy center. We called John last night because we have needed to get him registered and we didn't know if he still wanted to pursue engineering. We also needed to know if he was getting an early release and we needed mission information for the Pell forms. He is still in the office and we got him the first try and had our questions answered in a few minutes. He sounded good. We didn't visit; just got answers and

said we loved him. Less than four months he will be home—and gone again. I have been so grateful for Becky's expertise in figuring out schedules and other details for us with all of John's registration needing to be completed this week and me not having a clue how to do it.

Paul went in to Kesler's this morning and applied for a job for the summer. He suspected that he wouldn't get hired immediately but Jack was very sweet to him and kept him there about 25 minutes, visiting with him about the family and each of you other kids who worked there. He said to Paul, "If you are half the worker that your other brothers and sisters are, we would be delighted to have you work for us!" Paul is going to be mowing at the cemetery, doing private lawns, and worming until something opens up, but he feels good about it.

He had a difficult week last week with the student body elections. When the student body voted, Paul and Maria Wyne were ahead, but in the delegate assembly in the second round voting, Paul got beat out by the third place contender. Paul's good friend, Merritt VanOrden also lost out and so they didn't feel quite so bad about it. There were some very tight races and some good kids got elected for next year.

Mike is getting "senioritis" and made a bold move and asked a Blackfoot girl to Snake River's prom. He is starting to look at his bedroom in terms of "what am I going to take to Provo, what am I going to store for the next 3 years until I return from my mission, and (this is my favorite) what am I going to donate to DI?" How he is ever going to fit his CD player, Gary Larson joke books, Gorilla head, chase lounge, and potato digger wallhanging into a Heritage Hall dorm room is beyond me. I guess maybe he will leave the gorilla head here at home to keep me company.

SaraKay got invited to a friend's house today for a couple hours and when she realized that everyone else was gone somewhere but me, she said, "What are you going to do here all alone today, Mama?" I assured her that hard as it was, I would think of something!

We had a wonderful Easter and we held a special family program Saturday night complete with a short testimony meeting. Mike was working and missed most of the program but it was very sweet to hear the expressions of love for the Savior.

I was especially touched by Paul's remarks in view of the activities that he had been involved with the last few weeks. He said that he had always felt a love for the Savior, but in the last few weeks as he had struggled to keep up with all the demands on his time and energy that he had gone to the Lord for help and felt, more than ever before, the Savior's love and support. That is how life has been for me. I've had so many experiences that have placed me in situations where I knew I couldn't do it alone, and it has been in those times that I've turned to the Lord and came to know that He was aware of me and there to comfort and support. I am sure each of you can identify with Paul's feelings. I guess we need to be grateful



that life gets tough at times although we wouldn't wish it so.

April 25, 1995



[Dad] I was reading an article in the BYU Magazine entitled, "The Human Soul's Quest for God" by Rabbi Harold Kushner over the weekend. I especially identified with the following thought: *"I'm a traditional Jew, and I observe the biblical dietary laws. There are certain foods I don't eat. I suspect most of you assume I go around all day saying to myself, 'Boy, would I love to eat pork chops, but that mean old God won't let me. Not so. The fact of the matter is, I go around all day saying, 'Isn't it incredible? There are five billion people on this planet, and God cares what I have for lunch. And God cares who I sleep with. And God cares how I earn and spend my money. And God cares what kind of language I use.' Do you see what this view of God does? I'm not diminished by being told there are certain things I may not do because they are wrong. Rather, it enhances me. It turns me into a real human being, somebody whose deeds, whose decisions, whose choices matter at the highest level. I am convinced that every human being has an existential need for significance."* The article was full of such meaningful insights into the gifts and meaning a religious faith imparts to each of us.

This past week has been especially full of driving different cars from every dealer in

Blackfoot and Pocatello trying to find an inexpensive, reliable car for Becky to take to Provo. I think we finally found the one for her—a Chevrolet Corsica. It has been a real learning experience for her to go through the process of shopping for a car, getting the financing, insurance, and all the other details taken care of.

This weekend was our stake conference with Spencer Condie and Roger DeMordaunt as visitors. We were richly fed and inspired by their messages and thoroughly enjoyed meeting with our stake family. We are blessed with so many



friends.

[Mom] Saturday was the annual final music festival for the kids. Friday morning I realized that Tim had a scout campout that night and would miss his performance Saturday morning. I called and arranged for Linnea Hammond to judge him at school during the lunch hour so he could get his points. I wasn't sure how Tim would feel about this since several years ago he agreed to take piano lessons if I would promise not to let any of his friends know that he was. Well, anyway, when I told him I had arranged to have him judged at school, he didn't seem to mind. I worried that the situation would not be conducive to a good performance but when he got home, he said that he had scored a 98 and qualified for scholarship tryouts. He also commented that Linnea had taken about 10 minutes with him and showed him some techniques that he could use to improve his playing. I thought it was very good of her to take time from her hectic lunch hour to help Tim. Saturday morning Paul played well and also qualified for scholarship tryouts. When the kids got home from school yesterday, we had a quick supper and then got ready to go to the Civic Center for the competition.

Tim's piece is a loud one with big chords and it has given him something to really get into and enjoy. He was really psyched about the tryouts and making all kinds of crazy jokes about how he was going to "thrash"! He was out shooting hoops for a while (warming up) and he wore Mike's matching suspenders and tie for good luck. They must have worked for him because he won third place. Originally there were eight who qualified from the region to compete in his age group, but of that eight, only five showed up and Tim took third. He was the only boy but didn't seem to mind.

Paul competed against 21 other contestants. When he played his piece, he had one place where he messed up for a moment and I was afraid that he had lost



his chance to win. He thought so, too. When the judging was done, the judges announced that there were eight winners and two alternates selected. But, they had chosen three for "special commendation" because of the quality of their performance. Paul was one of the three! He was so surprised that he nearly toppled over! It was thrilling to see him on stage with the nine other winners (all girls) for pictures. It was really a payoff for all the early morning hours of sacrifice and practice.

We did have one disconcerting thing happen that could have been disastrous. The evening was going on rather long and SaraKay was lying on my lap when a girl singing an opera number hit an especially high note. All at once SaraKay let out an equally high pitch sound and Daddy and I both jumped trying to cover her face and mouth before the audience realized the soloist wasn't singing alone. SaraKay was surprised at our reaction, but got the message and didn't do it again. Later as I was putting her to bed she asked why she couldn't scream at the concert if they let the other girl. I guess some things are hard to understand when you are four.



Becky has had quite a week finding a car and doing everything to get it ready to take to Provo when she goes down this weekend. She got a cute Corsica and decided to test drive it to visit a boyfriend in Pocatello. When she got home she was fit to be tied. Once she had it out on the freeway and would then slow down at an intersection, the engine would kill. She was worried

Following the competition, I took Paul to the high school for Chambers practice and later he and Mike arrived home and joined in the ice cream party that was going on. About 10:30 Mike was in the computer room working on an Odell composition. Daddy and I were having personal prayers and I heard Mike say, "Oh, no!" Someone had taken the paper out of the printer and it had been adjusted to fit the infamous guide sheet for the class and Mike was tired and frustrated and sitting on the floor in a heap.

I convinced him to go to bed and get up early this morning and face the problem fresh. He agreed and went downstairs to bed. He really has his ups and downs with trying to keep up with school work, extra-curricular activities, and the garden center. If he hangs onto his GPA he will be one of three valedictorians and he is determined to do it. The month of May will be full of fun activities for Dad and I—a month of all the "lasts" for Mike.

she wasn't even going to make it home. Luckily, the fellow we bought it from told us that he would guarantee it for the first month and fix free anything that needed fixing. I've been so uptight about getting something reliable that when she got home and had had problems, I was ready to take the car down to the salesman and wrap it around his neck, but Daddy calmed me down and assured me that they would get to the bottom of the problem and resolve it. It is fixed and ready for another trial run this afternoon. Hopefully it will serve Becky well without a lot of worry. She is anxious to go but we have enjoyed having her here so much! It has been a real treat to be able to talk to her without paying long distance fees for the privilege. We will miss her terribly. So will the kids at the high school. She has really come to enjoy the kids and everywhere she goes, the high school kids come up and visit and say hi. She is also glad to get two months worth of experience to put on a resume' for the years ahead.

I wanted to mention something that John told Becky in a personal letter that he

hadn't mentioned in the family letter. He said that originally they were planning on moving him into the field these last months of his mission but because of the volume of translating and other work that needed to be completed before the new president arrives, he is pretty much going to stay in the office to help out there. He was a little disappointed but finally realized that he needed to serve where the Lord needs him not where he prefers. I think it is a tremendous compliment to him that he is doing well enough that he is one of the main translators and that he works with another missionary (a native of Taiwan) on special projects. He is having some wonderful opportunities and I am sure he will look back and know that his offering was acceptable to the Lord.

I was thinking last night about the blessing it has been in my life to have a good husband who provides for me so that I can give my time and attention to the family. I don't know how women do it who are stretched between job and home. I admire women who somehow hold it together with responsibilities of providing as well as nurturing. I know it is a tremendous blessing to me to be able to be a full-time homemaker and I appreciate Daddy's tireless efforts to provide me with what I need to keep things running smoothly. It is a wonderful luxury in today's economy. I love you and pray that the Lord will hear your prayers and keep you safe.

May 1, 1995

[Mom] It's a rainy, drizzly day today and I'm glad because I have lots to do indoors. I spent some good time in the garden last week just cleaning up, transplanting some strawberries, and picking rock. The warm sunshine on my face and the damp dirt on my hands felt good. SaraKay always enjoys our time spent outside and invariably our neighbor's hunting dog comes over to join us and plays a fun game of "fetch" with her

and her Frisbee. The day was so warm and pleasant; we could hear the birds chirping and all the sweet sounds of spring's awakening. I couldn't help thinking about the beauties that surround us daily and how grateful I am for eyes and ears, for health and strength, and for an understanding of our purpose in the grand scheme of things. It's also nice to be at a stage of life where I have the time to enjoy some simple pleasures and pull away from life's pressures for an hour or two. I know this is an exceptionally busy time for you who are students and you are constantly in our thoughts and prayers as you finish up your semesters.

One of the highlights of last week was a regional women's conference that the Relief Society hosted. Cheiko Okazaki was the guest speaker and she was absolutely fabulous! Her message was one of encouragement to do what we could to relieve the illiteracy and suffering of those around us. She stressed the importance of women at home and in the workplace making a difference in the lives of those they associate with. I was so touched and inspired by the things she said. It was a





special treat to be able to attend with Becky since for the last several years I have attended Women's Conferences alone.

Becky left yesterday for Provo....her car loaded to capacity. She spent the night at Steve and Bonnie's apartment although they were with Bonnie's family for the weekend attending Joel and Julie's graduation at Ricks. They came for a few hours last night to visit and we thoroughly enjoyed our time together. This has been the first break Steve has had from work for a long time and it was nice to see him get a little breather before starting again. SaraKay loved the chance to play with Rachel and pulled out most of her toys and stuffed animals entertaining her. She is such a pleasant baby and readily responds to all our antics.

I called Becky about 11 and she had arrived safely and spent the evening visiting with old roommates. I feel like another chapter in her life has begun and I know she is where she needs to be, doing

what she needs to be doing. Daddy gave her a sweet blessing before she left.

Last weekend was the last Woodbadge staff training session and Daddy is grateful to have that nearly completed. He had an extremely busy week and was really tired by the time he arrived home Saturday about 3. He will be leaving tomorrow for several days in Jackson Hole and then return to a busy weekend. His spring orchestra concert is Thursday as well as the Continuous Reading Fireside and we are going to go to the temple with Jennifer and James Saturday morning. We are thrilled to join with Staff and Kathy in this special occasion. Julianne (Scott and Jeanie's daughter) graduated with special honors and has been awarded the Spori scholarship. Grandpa and Grandma Larsen were able to join with her and her parents for her graduation on Saturday. Julianne will be attending BYU come fall.

May 8, 1995

[Mom] I realized part way through last week as I was thinking about my parent's wedding anniversary on May 5th that I had totally forgotten that Steph and Linds celebrated theirs on April 22nd. I'm not thinking about graduations or weddings in April since our school year finishes in May and that is how I am programmed. So, congratulations to Steph and Linds, Grandpa and Grandma Richards, and Steve and Bonnie... today!

We had the opportunity to be in the temple last Saturday with Jennifer and James and witness their marriage and sealing to their baby, Rachel Ann. It was a very sweet experience to be in the temple with Grandpa and Alva Lu, Gary and Linda and Mindy, and Staff and Kathy. When they brought the baby in, they had Jenn and James kneel at the far ends of the alter and Aunt Kathy held the baby on the alter and a temple worker took Rachel's tiny

hand and placed it on Jenn and James's while the sealer performed the sealing. It was the first time I had witnessed such a tiny baby being sealed to her parents and it was very touching. Daddy and I were in the temple doing sealings a couple of weeks ago and it was special to be involved with that. We also were able to go through the temple a couple of weeks ago with our neighbor, Jonathon Davis, as he took out his own endowments. This Saturday I will be going for Carene Godfrey's wedding and then help Brenda host a wedding dinner. Godfrey's have been dear friends over the years and I am glad to be invited to share in their day.

Last Saturday was prom. Mike took Sally Ogden from Blackfoot and Paul took Valerie Firth. They both looked spiffy in their white dinner jackets and tuxedo pants and cummer buns. Paul's group came here for a candlelight dinner and Mike and his date attended the annual KPVT Awards Banquet in Pocatello with Daddy. Mike was not one of the five finalists but they had a good time and then returned home to change into formals and tux's and head to

the dance. Paul's group of 12 did video scavenger hunts at the Pocatello Mall from 4 to 6:30, returned home to change into formal attire, went into the studio for pictures, returned here for dinner, went to the dance, went to Turpin Magnovox for games, and then home. By the time we had attended the temple, cut hair, hemmed tuxedo pants, picked up corsages, cooked and served dinner, and then cleaned up, Daddy and I were about ready to drop. Thank goodness prom only comes around once a year!

SaraKay always enjoys it when the boys have their dates come here for a special dinner. She helped me set the table and chose some mood music for the group. When Paul came up the stairs in his tuxedo, she asked, "Why are you wearing that bow on your neck?" Tim also was good help. He set the table, brought up the CD player, vacuumed the dining room, shook the rugs, unloaded the dishwasher, dusted, cut up lettuce, and sundry other tasks to relieve my stress. When Paul came home from the Mall, I commented to him that he owed Tim a big thanks for all he had done.





"Yah," Tim commented. "You owe me big time!"

Paul and Mike have been preoccupied with preparations for their AP Biology test on the 17th and Mike has his AP Calculus test this week. They pay \$75 to take the test and forfeit the fee if they fail. They are both pretty stressed about it. They also have been preparing for the annual Chamber's Spring Concert next week. They have extensive practices four nights this week including Friday night when they were scheduled to go with the Priests on an overnigher and rappelling activity. There just isn't enough time to fit everything in.

It rained everyday last week and all our mowing jobs were put on hold. Elaine Jones called this morning and said to skip bringing over the mower; to bring a hay baler instead. It's going to be quite a job with all the lawns so overgrown and long.

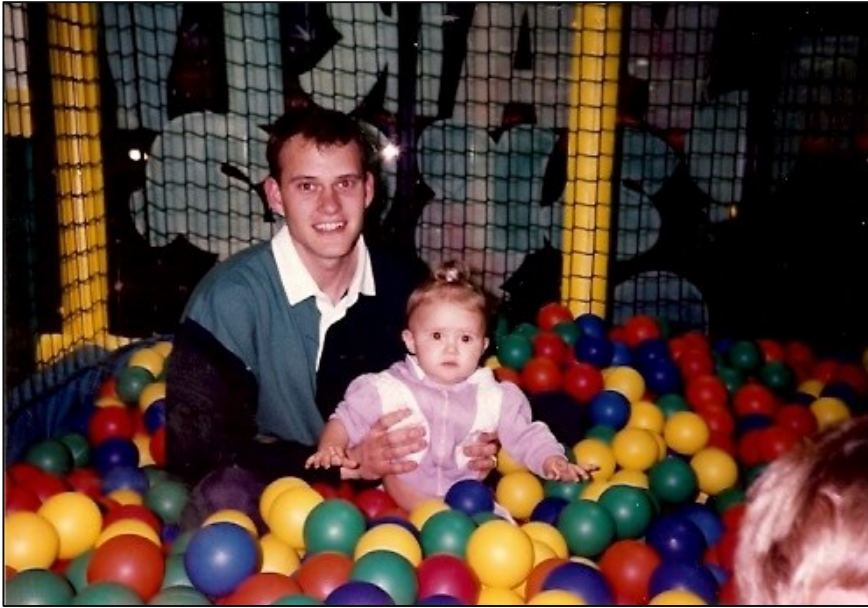
Tim is counting down the days until school is over. (5) His building is released early because of extensive remodeling that is going on and so his last day is this Friday. For many of the buildings in our district, school will not resume until October when the projects will be completed. What a

nightmare--a five month summer recess! Luckily our family is nearly all grown and summer isn't quite such a marathon for me anymore.

While I was in the temple sitting by Linda, she mentioned that Emily got her call to Columbus, Ohio and will be entering the MTC on June 28. That's exciting for her! Becky is settled into her routine in

Provo and loving it although the extensive walking has been hard on her foot. She enjoys her roommates, her ward, and says that all her classes are small and have lots of cute boys in them! Who could ask for anything more! Linds, Randy, and David all finish up finals this week and Steve and Linds are both attending spring term before taking a break. Another year completed, another year closer to graduation. Hurray!

It's hard to believe that John will be home in 3 and ½ months. His best friend, Dave Hammond, came to see us last Saturday and we had a good visit with him. He is job hunting and seemed a bit displaced and lonely. He looks just the same--maybe a little skinnier than when he left. He told us that the church is shrinking in Greece and they have actually lost a branch in that area since he started his mission. Quite a contrast to the growth in other areas of the world. His mission has 50 missionaries; it covers Greece and parts of Egypt and Lebanon. He told us lots of interesting things about missionary work in that part of the world; it made me appreciate the challenges the General Authorities face



meeting political guidelines and cultural barriers in the different areas.

Another special occasion that we had last week was the Continuous Reading Fireside for Mike and Paul. Author Jack Weyland, who recently settled in the Idaho Falls area from South Dakota, was the speaker and did a sweet job. Daddy and SaraKay and I were late because Daddy's annual spring orchestra concert was that same night and so we sent the boys to the fireside and we went to the concert. As the three of us got into the car to leave, Daddy joked that with all the piano recitals he's sat through over the years, it didn't seem right that only three of us were attending his orchestra concert with him.

I was so thrilled with the community orchestra and how well they did. They have grown in numbers and ability in the last two years and really sounded nice. Daddy looked so handsome in the trumpet section and I just wished more of you could have been here to pat him on the back for all his efforts.

[Dad] "The Mock Turtle, in a deep hollow tone, said: 'Sit down, and don't speak a word 'til I've finished.' So they sat down and nobody spoke for some minutes. Alice

thought to herself, 'I don't see how he can ever finish if he doesn't begin.'" I guess that's the way it is regarding my letter writing—I can't ever finish if I don't begin. Also, we are so proud of each of you and what you have begun and know that the finish line is in sight. We just got a call from Dave and Andrea that he was selected from a panel of applicants for a fellowship with the Arizona hospital system this summer and continuing part time during this next school year. It seems like much of

his work experience and his goal to go into rural health care dovetailed into the requirements of this position very well, so he is really confident and excited about the opportunity.

The following poem is one that children memorized from McGuffey's Primer in the nineteenth and early twentieth century's. It is a good one for helping to keep focused on the task at hand.

"Work while you work, Play while you play;
One thing each time, That is the way. All
that you do, Do with your might; Things
done by halves Are not done right." That is
excellent counsel for all of us, and I hope
we each have some time to play
occasionally, in order to give our work the
meaning and satisfaction it should bring.

About the only one of my activities last week that Mom didn't mention was the two days I spent with the Regional Endowment Attorney working in Jackson, Driggs, and Idaho Falls. We were involved in several key meetings regarding some of the major gifts we are working on for the Council. It is really satisfying to feel like we are doing things that are soon to bear fruit with some significant gifts to help fund the Council for the future. We also had our endowment

brochure or “case statement” finished so we could start distributing it. It turned out well and we are getting some good comments from it. We also received word about completion of the legal work on another major gift from a lady in



Pocatello. She has a bunch of Micron stock that has appreciated in value but is not paying enough of a dividend for her to live on. Through a Charitable Remainder Trust she benefits from the appreciation without having to pay capital gains taxes and greatly increases her income.

I don't remember if we mentioned our new riding mower. It is a nearly new Toro and it mulches, bags, or just expels the grass out the side. It has made our big lawn much less of a chore—in fact I have a hard time beating Tim to the mower.

May 16, 1995

Children are like airplanes; you only hear about the ones that crash. After watching the Chambers Spring Spectacular last night I think that opening statement is really true. It was so satisfying to watch those kids perform at that level and to enjoy the variety and quality of talent. Recognition for that spectacular performance will be scant and fleeting—probably nothing in the newspaper—but the memory of it will be etched deeply on my memory banks. One of the thoughts that kept going through my mind also, was how much better the Chamber's performances of you older kids would have been in that auditorium instead of in the middle of a gym floor. The sound, the lighting, the ambiance, everything is so

much more conducive to an excellent concert in the auditorium. *“Use the talents you possess: The woods would be very silent if no birds sang there, except those that sang the best.”*

It has been so wonderful to see some sunshine yesterday and today. Robin Williams said, *“Spring is nature's way of saying, ‘Let's party!’* Spring fills you with such an exultant feeling of joy in being alive.

Last Friday night my Explorers were scheduled for a campout and then to go rappelling on Saturday. With work, Chamber's practices, and the Godfrey wedding, my group of participants dwindled down to half a dozen. We went down by the river and then were rained on all night. It wasn't too bad. It is important for young people to learn how to cope with adversity. Yeah, right! Why do us older people have to be with them? We have already learned those lessons. I listened to the rain splattering on the tarp of my lean-to all night long and hardly slept. The rappelling had to be rescheduled because of the snow in the mountains where we were going.

Mother's day was a good day for your Mom. It was so good to hear from each of you. She can hardly wait to get her roses planted. I appreciate each of you helping to

make her day a memorable one. We also visited with Dad and Alva Lu. They are both doing well. It is always a delight to visit with them. They came to the Chambers concert last night and were thrilled with the talents of the young people at Snake River. Mike and Paul were so appreciative of their support. Let me wind up with a few more thoughts. *"A minute of action is better than an hour of worry. A day of worry is more exhausting than a week of work." "True charity consists of helping those you have every reason to believe would not help you." "If you've reached a dead end, it*



could be that you're sitting on it." "Tact is the ability to make a person see the lightning without letting him feel the bolt. "Honesty in small things is not a small thing." "Wisdom isn't the acquisition of knowledge. It's knowing which knowledge is worth acquiring."

[Mom] Daddy has already mentioned the concert. It was such a treat to watch the kids perform. They have their final performance tonight and then their '94-'95

experience will nearly be over. I had some rather bitter-sweet feelings last night during the concert as I realized that this would be one of the last times Mike and Paul would be on stage together. I was grateful I could shed my tears in the darkened auditorium and not explain my feelings to anyone.

After the concert, we held our usual "rehashing" session and talked through the bloopers, strong points, and favorite parts. Mike has his AP Calculus test today so we tried not to stay up too late but it just

doesn't seem right to let the occasion pass without milking it for every ounce of satisfaction! Sunday evening both boys asked for a father's blessing and Monday morning Daddy gave them each one before they left for school. Tomorrow will be the Biology AP test.

Another concert we attended was the Jr. High band and choir on Wednesday. Linnea Hammond works miracles with that age group and she had three bands and three choirs performing as well as soloists and students as accompanists to the choirs. Tim was in concert choir and I noticed that all but three of his basketball team were standing by him in the choir. Linnea had them perform a '50's medley and do choreography to it. What fun! I could hardly believe my eyes as I watched Tim swaying and singing. He even managed a smile.

I kept thinking about the power of music to refine, enlighten, inspire, and bring joy. I wish every child in the world could have the opportunity to develop their musical abilities and be exposed to beautiful music. I have noticed that slowly we are

integrating our Spanish population into our music program; I thrill at seeing that. I know these beautiful Mexican people have talent but often the opportunity for musical training is not there for them.

One of the highlights of Mother's Day (besides hearing from each of you) was the phone call from John. He sounded good and said that he is excited to be going back out into the field in two weeks. He is in the process of training someone to replace him in the office. Two of his closest friends have now returned from their missions and I was wondering if maybe that would get him anxious to return but he said that he was really anxious to make the last three months the best!

Mike and Paul had a bunch of Chamber singers practicing here Sunday night when John called and he could hear them in the background as we visited on the phone. That made him homesick! We are proud of him and so excited for August 23!



One of the nice things about holidays is that they prompt me to think about the purpose of the celebration. The last few weeks I have spent a lot of time thinking about each one of you children and the blessing you are to me in my life. As some of you will remember, a few months before I got pregnant with Tim I was wondering about whether or not it was time to have another baby. Daddy had gotten up early to go bale hay and I had roused for a few minutes to see him off and then fallen asleep again. I had a dream about being in a beautiful place and being taken to an area where some women were caring for children. I was shown a baby and the impression came to me that I was being given a choice as to whether I wanted to have this baby come to our family. My first impulse was to respond that I had so many children already that I couldn't possibly handle one more but as I gazed at the child, I was filled with wonder at how beautiful it was and I found myself saying, "Yes." Then, thinking the decision was over, I prepared to leave when another woman approached me holding yet another baby. Realizing that I was being offered this child as well, I responded, "I have so many children already, perhaps you could send that one to my sister Kathy who would love to have another baby." For a moment the woman hesitated and in that moment as I gazed upon the second child, I knew that I couldn't refuse this beautiful baby either. "Yes, I will take that one, too," In the moments following my response, I saw the words as if written in bold relief: not a burden, but a blessing. So vivid was the dream that I awoke and lay for a long time thinking about it and wondering if truly there were two babies yet to come to our home.

When I got pregnant I thought it might be twins but when it was only one, I figured I had another pregnancy ahead. As Tim got older, I kept thinking that we would have



another baby, but when none came, I decided that our family was complete.

When I had a miscarriage when Tim was almost eight, the doctor counseled me to go on birth control pills. He said that I was old to be having children and that if I had miscarried once I might conceive again and have a pregnancy to deal with. It was nice to have a Mormon doctor because it made it easy for me to tell him I had been waiting for another baby for several years and that I felt good about carrying on and leaving the way open.

The past few weeks I have thought about the message of that dream and how it gave me the courage to move ahead and complete our family. I have felt that each of you children is "a blessing, not a burden" and that my life has been rich and full because of you. Mom

May 23, 1995

[Mom] As I have visited with each of you regarding our Richards reunion, it has been obvious that our numbers will be small. I decided to try another plan and see if we could end up with a larger group. Here



is the new revised edition of Richards Reunion '95. The reunion will be a one day picnic and party at Lagoon on September 2nd. The person I contacted said that this is the slowest day of the year at Lagoon and that we would have lots of fun with a minimum of crowds. I reserved the Arbor Terrace for our group and want each of you to bring a picnic lunch of salads, chips, drink, goodies, and sandwiches or chicken that you could contribute to a big buffet for us all. Please bring paper products and anything else that would make your stay for the day a pleasant one. Lagoon opens at 10 and closes at 11 and we can have the Arbor for the full time. I am enclosing some tickets that



8:30 and will arrive home about 8:30 Friday night. True to form, things started going wrong soon after he left. As we took him to Blackfoot, I noticed that Davis's cow was out running around. It was also getting cloudy and threatening to rain. We have had so much rain lately and have been battling a leak in our basement foundation in Paul's room that has become a major concern. The cement patio that

you are to bring with you that day and pay at the gate for whoever you bring. These advance tickets allow us to get the discount rate. The price information is on them. We hope that those of you who have long distances to travel can dovetail this reunion into your existing plans. I'm sure most of the kids will want to take advantage of the all-day pass which includes the water park and most of us older's will want to visit in the arbor. Hopefully there will be something there for everyone. We are hoping that by rescheduling this event, we can get more of you to come. Will everyone try to make it? If you have questions, call. I know Mom would like to have a genealogy session and have us eat lunch together. I'll be in touch. Sue

[Mom] Daddy is in Portland for the week so I guess he won't be contributing to the letter this time. He left yesterday morning about

is adjacent to his bedroom has cracked and tipped up so all the rain that hits it and all the rain from the roof above runs down the cement, down the foundation, and into his bedroom. We have literally sucked up





gallons of water from his carpet and kept a fan running day and night to dry it out before mold and mildew take over.

We need to redo the patio but in the meantime; Daddy installed a rain gutter on the roof and thought that it would help. As we left to take Daddy to Blackfoot, Tim commented that he was going to go out and watch the rain gutter work. When I got home it had started to pour and Tim was up on a ladder watching the rain NOT go into the rain gutter. Somehow it wasn't catching the runoff and water was again getting in Paul's room. I ran into the garage, grabbed our 30 gallon garbage can and placed it in a critical spot. It rained off and on all

day and by night the can was over half full from the roof runoff. I was grateful we had used the garbage can and not had all that water in the basement.

Throughout the day, Tim and I drove back and forth from the cemetery trying to get the rest of the mowing completed for Memorial Day. The rain kept us guessing all day long. Luckily I got the garden planted Saturday and the moisture will help. Tim and the neighbor kids got the cows back in and Roy repaired the fence last night. I guess we will survive. It has been nice to have Tim out of school and helping out. He is a wonderful babysitter for SaraKay!

Last Saturday Mike had a date to a Blackfoot dance with Sally Ogden. Daddy and I left the front door unlocked and the outside light on for him and went to bed about 11:00. Paul had been at a party and





he came and checked in about 11:30. He asked when Mike would be getting home and I told him about midnight. I assumed that Paul was headed to bed so I went back to sleep. I guess Paul had other ideas. From conversations with Mike, Paul was thinking that maybe tonight was the night that Mike might kiss Sally goodnight and since Sally was going to be dropping Mike off here at our home, Paul decided to wait up and try to see the action. He very cleverly situated himself in Daddy's office with the blind adjusted so that he could see the front step but they couldn't see him. Time passed. No Mike and Sally. Finally about 12:30 Mike arrived, said his goodnights, and came in the front door only to find Paul, curled up in the "fetal position" and fast asleep on the office floor. Strange sight! He suspected what Paul was doing sleeping in the office and awoke him. Curses! Foiled again! Sunday as we were laughing about the situation, I commented that it was a good thing Mike hadn't invited Sally in for a few minutes or Paul would have really felt silly. I told Paul I couldn't believe that he would spy on Mike like that and Mike said it didn't surprise him since he had done that very thing

himself numerous times when you older kids were on dates. Hmmmm. Well, anyway, I guess Mike didn't kiss Sally and Paul didn't miss much -- except a good night's sleep!

I took SaraKay to register for kindergarten last Thursday and she had a great time. At first she was apprehensive but I think it was because she thought she was going to have to get up and read to the group or do some other amazing feat. When she realized that all she had to do was make a paper crown and string fruit loops on a licorice rope, she settled down and had a wonderful time. When they had the class form into groups and leave us parents to fill out forms in the gym, I felt a tug at my

heartstrings, but she was ready and excited!

Sunday was the Aaronic Priesthood program and it went beautifully. The highlight of the meeting was a father/son choir led by Kent Fife. There were about 25 members and it was so sweet.

Mike is on his final composition, Paul is starting to study for his second ACT on June 9, Tim is mowing, mowing, mowing, and I am enjoying these last few weeks of school. I am so grateful that most of you are getting a break from school for a while and hope you will enjoy your summer.

May 30, 1995

[Dad] Last week in Portland was a great getaway. The weather in Portland was beautiful—the best weather they have had all year. And it was raining again at home while I was there. The meetings were excellent and it was a good review of the manpower, money, and management principles we learned at NEI-1 in Texas a year and a half ago. It was an excellent group of District Executives from all over the Western Region. I think the time could

have been worked around so that we could have finished a day earlier and I would have liked it better. Wednesday, we had the opportunity to visit the Sea Base operated by the Cascade Pacific Council in Portland. We then rode on a retired naval vessel that had been donated to them. It had been used to lay sonar lines and had been kept immaculately clean and in good repair. It was a treat for me to get to pilot it several miles down the Columbia, under a bridge, and to dock it at a riverside Red Lion Inn and restaurant where we ate dinner. The meals were all great, but on the rich side; I had my fill of sea food.

We had a quiet Memorial Day week end. Part of Saturday I spent working on the next issue of the Trails and finishing it up for Rick to typeset. Hopefully everything will come together this week. I also finished off the Woodbadge log I have been working on with the identification #'s of the course carved into the side of the log with a dremel tool. It looks good with the letters painted orange!

The seniors in my Priests quorum are starting to get senioritis and are getting harder to handle in class. We had fifteen of them in the Bishop's office Sunday, plus Danny, Bishop Godfrey and I. We have a combined activity with the Laurels tonight playing softball and having a BBQ. Sue is saving my bacon on the BBQ. I really appreciate her willingness to help me with my assignments and help me to look good. Let me share a poem with you.

THE BOY WE WANT

A boy that is truthful and honest

And faithful and willing to work;

But we have not a place that we care to disgrace

With a boy that is ready to shirk.

Wanted—a boy you can tie to. A boy that is trusty and true.

A boy that is good to old people, And kind to the little ones too.

A boy that is nice to the home folks, And pleasant to sister and brother,

A boy who will try when things go awry To be helpful to father and mother.

These are the boys we depend on—Our hope for the future, and then

Grave problems of state and world's work await

Such boys when they grow to be men.

[Mom] It was good to get Daddy back home Friday night. But, aside from a few minor mishaps, the week went smoothly. It





has been so good to have Tim home and able to do the mowing jobs and take the pressure off Paul these last few weeks. When Mike went to work Saturday he called and told me that Paul was on the schedule for this week at Kesler's. What a nice surprise! He worked last night with Mike in the garden center and tonight will be there again without Mike at his side. It was a little scary for him last night but hopefully he will start getting more familiar with things and not feel so intimidated by the situation.

This morning Mike left at seven for senior day at Lagoon. Tomorrow is Seminary graduation and the next day is high school graduation. We went to Baccalaureate with Mike Sunday and he performed in a male quartet that did very well. He will be performing with a group for Seminary graduation and with the Chambers Thursday night. We took the kids shopping yesterday while Mike picked out his graduation gift—a navy sport coat, dress pants, tie and shoes.

He has really needed these items. Seems like we evaluate everything we do lately in terms of upcoming college and mission. I have adjusted to the fact that he will be leaving soon for college, but the thought that he will leave around Christmas for a mission just "blows my mind". Sunday we attended mission homecomings for David Hammond and Carl Anderson, two of John's best friends. It made me homesick for John, especially when they sang together. Many of that group of kids was there for the meeting, including Russ Lee and Ed Gregory. Later on Sunday evening Paul was sitting in Dad's recliner reading and commented, "I was more homesick for John today than I have been since he left. Seeing Dave and Carl did it to me." I had to agree. As I sat in the meeting and looked at Dave and Carl, a flood of sweet memories came rushing into my mind; it was a pleasant experience as well as a longing one. It's funny how memories work. Sometimes I will be focused on a task and something will remind me of something that happened with one of you children years ago. It may seem like yesterday or it seems like eons ago.





One regret that I have with you older children is that during your growing up years we didn't spend some time on Memorial Day weekend visiting the cemetery. When Grandma Larsen died, we started visiting her grave each year and about that same time, Grandma Richards asked me if I would mind putting a bouquet on Grandma Gooch's grave in Idaho Falls. Visiting the cemetery was a ritual that I grew up with because Grandma Gooch had lots of family buried in the Pocatello cemetery and every Memorial Day she would get fresh flowers, mostly lilacs, from her yard and put them in mayonnaise bottles covered with tin foil, and make her pilgrimage to the cemetery. I never

really enjoyed sharing in this tradition as a child and so it never was a part of what I did with my own family. The last few years we have started this practice. I think it has been meaningful for the kids and it certainly has brought a lot of joy to me. There is always such a peaceful feeling at the cemetery and it is heartwarming to see



the graves decorated and the reverence of the visitors. I also enjoy the opportunity to pay tribute to those who gave so much that my life can be so rich and full. Sunday we took a bouquet of daisies for Grandma Larsen and some pansies for Grandma Gooch on Saturday and it set a nice tone for our weekend.

Last Thursday was Jonie's graduation with her associate degree in accounting. I am so proud of her for sticking with it despite all her other responsibilities with home, family, and work. She has also been involved with a committee that makes decisions about their Headstart programs in their school district and last summer had the opportunity to visit and tour Washington D.C. with other committee members. She is presently in touch with the Pima tribe in Arizona and is negotiating for a job opportunity there. She enters an intense training program in Minneapolis the first week in September for six months and then will be qualified for a better job. I admire her determination to make a better life for herself and her family and appreciate her efforts to keep in touch with us. Congratulations to you, Jonie!

Hopefully the rest of you students are taking a much needed break from the rigors of school this summer—all except Steve, Linds, and Becky who are still hard at it. Not a day goes by that I don't think about each of you and pray that the Lord will be aware of your struggles and needs. We pray especially for Andrea as she enters her final month of this pregnancy and hope that all will go well for her.

June 5, 1995

Last week was the culmination of Mike's high school years and he felt a lot of satisfaction with how things went. Wednesday evening was Seminary graduation, Thursday was high school graduation and the all-night senior party,

Friday was the annual father-son outing (complete with the traditional rain storm), and Saturday was the Chamber's Alumni Concert honoring Mrs. Jensen.

Last night Mike attended his first young adult fireside with some friends. Tuesday evening was a combined Laurel/Priest barbeque and Daddy and I worked hard to prepare the goodies and get things ready only to be disappointed that 15 instead of 30 attended. Many of the seniors who went to Lagoon didn't arrive home at the appointed hour and were unable to come so there was plenty of sloppy Joe and chips left over. When Mike came home Thursday morning from graduation practice, he commented that a lot of the boys in his class were going to shave their legs, wear T-shirts and shorts, and go barefoot to graduation. I expressed a strong opinion about the graduating class showing some appreciation and respect for the occasion by dressing appropriately and he agreed. I was especially concerned since Mike was one of the speakers and would be up front



for the evening.

That night at graduation, probably 50% of the boys were in T-shirts and shorts, no socks and sandals. Many of the graduates had brought toys such as beach balls, bubble blowers, bubble gum, and comic books and proceeded throughout the ceremony to create a stir and detract from the speakers and music. One student sprayed the principal with some kind of gag liquid when he was handed his diploma. I felt badly that some of the kids tried to ruin it for the rest of them. Mike did a good job on his speech and had a lot of positive responses from students, parents, and teachers. Dad and I were asked to chaperone the all-nighter but they eventually didn't need us and we came home and Daddy finished up the quarterly scout paper that he was in charge of. He was run ragged by the time the week was over.

Saturday night was the Chamber's Concert. It was the culmination of 23 years for Marva Jensen and all her former



Chamber students were invited to sing in a combined choir. About 160 students performed in the choir and several soloists did numbers. What a thrill for Daddy and me to see classmates of your children as well as some of the young people who Daddy worked with in the Moreland Second Ward during his time as Bishop. Ward during his time as Bishop. The auditorium was filled to capacity and following the concert we spent time visiting with many of our old acquaintances. I am enclosing a copy of the program so you can see the performances and who attended. I am also enclosing some family letters that we received from Mark this month that would be of interest.

I just got a call from the high school counselor who informed me that Mike just won another scholarship for \$1500 from the Paul Fowler Foundation. We love you and pray for your happiness. Mom

June 11, 1995

[Dad] The Priest's met at Danny Acevedo's Tuesday night and he shared his slides of his mission in Central America. He had some very interesting things to tell about some of the archeological ruins that he saw while he was there that helped to prove the Book of Mormon in his mind. The boys were interested to hear of baptismal fonts, Star of David on faces of gods carved on some temples, and a formation of carved gods representing the First Presidency and the Twelve.

At the doctor's request Sue went in for an MRI to see if there is any physical or structural reason for her migraines. We'll find out the results soon.

Another highlight of the week was the regional production of "Saturday's Warrior". It was delightful. They had full audiences every performance. Randy's Mom was in it and did a great job. Paul, Tim, and I went together on Thursday night and picked up

some ice cream on the way home. We decided Lemon Custard wasn't going to rank among our favorites. I've been trying to tie up all the loose ends in getting ready to leave Wednesday for a week and a half for Woodbadge. I feel like I am finally ready. There has been a real load on me as the Staff advisor and also with the major role that I play on staff this year. It has been hard to even think about Endowment work this week.

We have finally had a couple days of sunshine. The rain and frost this week has played havoc with gardens and crops. What plants were up were frozen and after weeks of rain the seeds in the ground are rotting. But we have jumped right into summer with hot, humid days yesterday and today. Just a couple thoughts to end on. *"You cannot climb uphill thinking downhill thoughts."* *"Those who wish to sing, always find a song."* Dad

[Mom] As Daddy mentioned, we have had nearly 10 days of rain and two nights of hard frosts. It has been disastrous for



gardens and the spuds that were up. Yesterday we saw the first bright sunshine and today is equally as beautiful. We held a family planning session last night to talk through all the events of the coming two weeks and to anticipate accomplishing what we need to do.

Daddy has really been busy getting supplies, presentations, and everything else ready for Woodbadge. I wanted to clean the garage Saturday but Daddy suggested that it would be much simpler to do once he and all his Woodbadge gear were gathered and gone, so I opt to wait.

Life has been good since summer began. Mike works a 40 hour week which leaves him lots of time for organizing his room, writing thank you notes, and playing with friends.

Paul spent most of last week studying for his ACT on Saturday. He said that he felt all right about how he did but it is very hard to really assess the results. He received a 29 the first time and would like to raise it to a 30 in order to pull in some scholarship money. He is president of Honor Society and has quite a good resume including some piano awards that I think will help him. He recently won a Fine Arts scholarship that he is using to help pay his tuition to BYU music camp the week of June 25. He also received the Xerox Award for receiving the highest grade on the ACT in the reading area. Hopefully we can make him sound like a super guy on the scholarship apps and he'll have what he needs for college. He hasn't got a lot of hours at Kesler's but enough to supplement his time mowing and this week he is going to mow at the cemetery and get some hours there.

Tim has basketball camp for two hours a day for the week. Many of his friends are going to Ricks College and paying \$250 for a week of camp but we couldn't feel good about that and he hated to give up a chunk

of his savings to pay for it. Tim has worked hard this summer and has already earned over \$300 with his mowing business.

As Daddy mentioned, I had an interesting experience on Thursday at the hospital. I have been having my monthly headaches every two weeks now for the past two months and I decided enough was enough and went to the doctor and pleaded my case— again. He decided to start with an MRI and make sure that nothing was wrong with my brain. (I can hear all the smart remarks some of you are making). I went in Thursday and they had me lie on this narrow table and then they pushed a button and I went into a metal tube. A mirror was attached to the top of the tube in case I got claustrophobia. The nurse told me that I would hear some very annoying loud banging and would need to lie perfectly still for each test. The total time would be about 30 minutes. I asked for some earplugs.

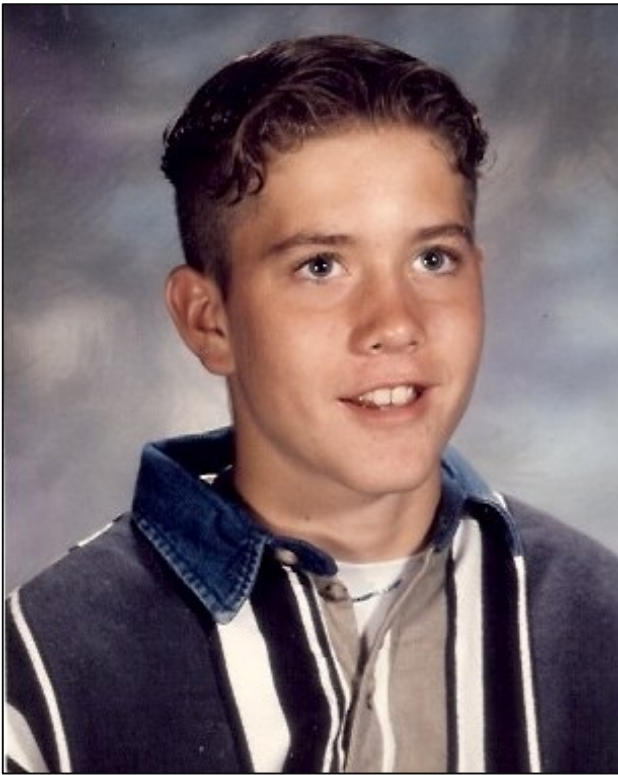
The nurse was right. There was a lot of loud banging, but it was no worse than what I have experienced the last 25 years working in the kitchen with toddlers and I laid there and thought about my week and some of the things I have wanted to give some thought to and got along great. The nurse kept asking me if I was okay and I assured her that I was. It really was quite nice to be all alone and away from the hubbub of life and rest for a minute. Anyway, I haven't felt apprehensive about the results and I just hope that the doctor can find something that will help alleviate the headaches until I get through this time of life and my hormones stabilize a little. (Mike and I have a lot in common when it comes to hormones; he is constantly commenting that his give him problems, too.) I'm enclosing a letter, the only letter we have received from John since his transfer to his new area. He seems to be happy to be teaching again and we are pleased for him to finish up his mission in the field.

We received a letter from the mission office encouraging us to do all we could to encourage him to keep his mind on his mission these last few months and make them his best. I knew it was a form letter sent to all parents but I wasn't sure it was necessary. It has been hard to get John to address matters at home regarding college. He is so involved in the work that he isn't thinking about BYU, housing, or registration. Luckily, Becky has been around to get things ready for him. His release date is August 21 but Daddy suspects that we won't see him until the 22 or 23, depending on the time difference. The time is flying by.

Mike is going to be ordained an Elder in July. Tim will be ordained a teacher on the 25th of June. I noticed today that Tim is almost as tall as Mike now and inherited Mike's old Sunday shoes. He has stood outside Mike's bedroom door as we have



done our thorough cleaning and been ready to catch anything that was tossed his

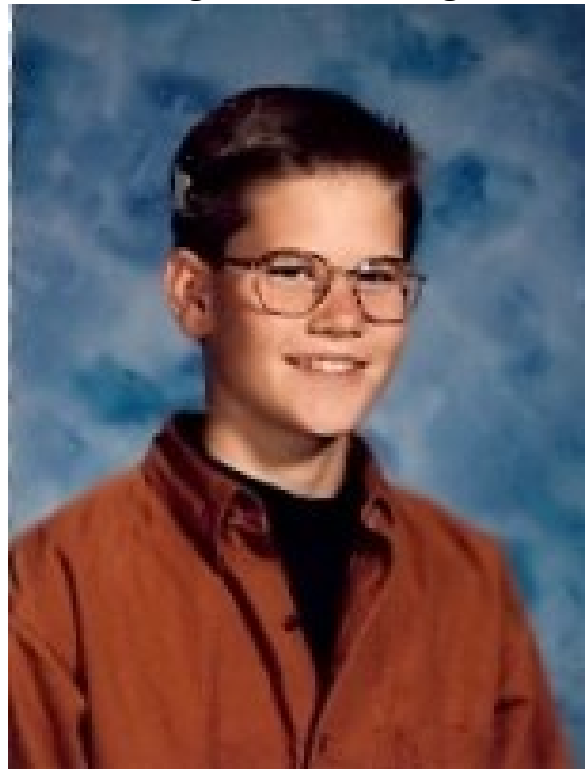


way. He recently wrote a letter to Nike explaining that he thoroughly enjoys their products but recently purchased basketball shoes (last September) that were quite a disappointment to him because the Velcro kept coming undone as he played.



We all chuckled when we read the letter but he sent it off and last week received an answer that if he would send the shoes to them they would send him a new pair. Pretty on the ball company to take care of their customers that way! Tim really does buy a lot of products from them and he was truthful about the shoes. They have been quite a disappointment to him and given him fits when they would pop open.

Andrea is in the hospital today having labor induced. When she delivered Laurel, she fractured her tailbone and her present doctor thought that maybe if they induced labor this time and the baby wasn't quite so big, Andrea might have an easier delivery. David promised to let us know the minute the baby is born. Andrea's mother arrived last night and is there to give the



help they need to keep things calm at home while mother and baby recover. Our prayers are with her and she is foremost in our thoughts.

One of the things I was thinking about while I was lying in that metal tube was you children and the challenges you face. I



*Wood Badge WU2-107-95
Island Park, Idaho*

know that Daddy and I are aware of many of your concerns but you siblings are not always aware of each other's struggles. It is my hope that you will remember each other in your prayers. Surely if we all petition the Lord for each other, He will send the comfort and strength we need.

Father's Day June 18, 1995

[Mom] Last week Paul asked me what day it was and I said, "Wednesday." He said, "This week has gone on forever!" It had for me, too. Let me mention a few highlights. Monday Andrea and David called to give us the good news of the birth of Angela Susan at 1:15 p.m.; 20 and 3/4 inches long and 7 lb. 14 oz. It was a much easier delivery than her first and they were both grateful and relieved. As some of you will remember, Andrea broke her tailbone

delivering Laurel and suffered for several weeks before she could move freely again. She was hoping that she could avoid that injury this time but it broke during delivery and she is dealing with it again. Her doctor suggested surgery to have it removed. Andrea's mother is helping with her recovery and she thought this might be the best time to get the surgery done. The decision will be made based on the information they find out Tuesday. Aside from that, the new baby is healthy and sweet and Laurel is adjusting to a new sister. I have been so grateful for Mom Cottam's help. I remember how valuable my mother was to me when a new baby arrived and the household was turned upside down for a few days until we got adjusted. I'm sure that Andrea and Dave would appreciate our prayers.



Daddy left for Woodbadge Wednesday morning. He has worked long hours preparing presentations, carving logs, making crafts, and planning menus. Right up until the minute he left, we were pulling things together to get him out the door. He was really stressed and exhausted by the time he left and when he called the other night, he sounded worn out. The staff arrived on Wednesday to set up and the participants were to arrive yesterday to begin the week-long training. Hopefully things will go well and the staff will feel rewarded for all their efforts. The night before he left, we were lying in bed going over all the loose ends that needed attending to while he was gone, including insurance claims, car repairs, mower repairs, watering instructions, and sundry other details. I told Daddy that I was feeling like a widow must feel with all the responsibilities of running the house and family without a husband to counsel with or share the load. Looking on the bright side, Daddy commented, "Yes, Dear, just think of it this way. You are getting all the good experience of being a widow and yet I am still alive!"

Things have gone relatively well for us in his absence. One of my goals was to go through the garden and salvage what I

could after the 10 days of rain and two nights of frost. It was very disheartening to lose all my bedding plants and much of my corn to the frost.

I began the process of weeding and replanting Thursday. We got enough sunshine last week to coax the potatoes up and I was grateful they didn't peek through earlier and get nipped by the frost. My berries are flourishing but the beans must have rotted in the ground because not a single

one has come up. I worked for the better part of two days and have hardly made a dent in the work. Part of the problem was that Tim and I couldn't get the rototiller to start and we kept trying and finally the pull cord broke. I was trying to loosen the screws on the casing for the cord and badly pinched my palm with the pliers. Tim eventually got the pull cord fixed but the tiller still wouldn't respond. I decided to hoe the garden by hand but it has really gone slowly. We also broke the handle of one of the mowers but we took it to the blacksmith and got some help from him on that project.



I was supposed to have the Cadillac in for a new windshield but when they were installing it they cracked the new one and so that's got to be done again. The van's been having trouble with the transmission and tomorrow I am going to call DarVel and see if he can get it checked for us. Ron Mangum made a trip to Provo to bring Becky's car back for repairs and Becky came home for Tera



Adam's wedding on Friday and was going to take her car back today....fixed. Saturday morning we called Ron to see if he had fixed it and he said that he had been driving it all over for two days and hadn't found anything wrong. Becky and I were both frustrated because we knew she had been unable to keep it running in Provo and she didn't want to return to Provo with some hidden problem just waiting to happen again. Ron told her to take the car for the day, run around in it and then bring it back to him and he would see if anything happened that would give him a clue as to what he was dealing with. The car ran fine all day Saturday but Becky left it with him that night. This morning she got up and went to an early meeting so she could leave for Provo by 10:30 and take care of business there.

When she went to get her car, it and Ron were nowhere to be found. We called his wife and she didn't know where he was. We went to the garage and banged on the doors and windows trying to raise him but to no avail. We didn't know what to do but I had to get to Sacramento meeting to lead the singing so I left Paul home with Becky

and they went looking for Ron. Part way through our meeting, Paul came in late and told me that Ron had taken the car to town and had been stranded. He knew by the symptom what he was dealing with. He and his mechanic worked on it and got it ready by about noon. As I was teaching my class, Becky poked her head in and asked if I could visit for a minute. She said she was just leaving and that hopefully the problem was fixed. I gave her a hug and sent her off.

My thoughts and prayers were with her for most of the afternoon and I started trying to call her in Provo but got the answering machine. At about seven 7 I tried again and was able to reach her. She said that Saturday night in her prayers she had asked the Lord to please bless the car that if there was truly something wrong that it would manifest itself so that Ron could get it fixed before she returned to Provo. She knew that her prayers were answered. She then said that she had started back to Provo about 12:30 and it had started raining before she got to the Trading Post. She turned on the windshield wipers and the one on the driver's side got stuck. She

pulled off the road and tried to fix it but to no avail so she limped along to the exit and tried again. She then proceeded to get back onto the freeway and had not gone very far when the accelerator stuck. She tried to release it by tapping it like Ron told her to do but to no avail. She pulled over again but couldn't get it to respond. She turned the car off and waited to see if anyone would stop and help her get to a phone. She waited but no one stopped and so she climbed in the back, donned some jeans and walking shoes and started walking back to the trading post. Before she had gone far in the rain, an elderly couple stopped and offered to drive her to the trading post. When she got to a phone she realized that we were all still in church so she decided to sit at a nearby picnic table and read her scriptures. She noticed that there were lots of travelers and tourists and an elderly gentleman and his son were using the nearby phone. She overheard the elderly gentleman on the phone comment that they were in Idaho and that they were enjoying their trip. Becky had an impression that she should visit with these two men and she asked the younger one where they were from. He commented that they were from Canada and were returning from a trip to Las Vegas. The man asked where she was from and she told him that she was from Blackfoot and was just waiting to get help with her car. The man replied that he was a mechanic and might be able to help her. The elderly gentleman stayed at the trading post and the younger one took her to her car and adjusted something under the hood, gave her some instruction if the accelerator should

stick again, wished her well, and sent her on her way. She arrived safe and sound in Provo four hours later. She said that the impressions she felt as she dealt with these strangers were so strong that she knew the Lord was guiding her and providing a way for her to solve her problem. The Lord really had been blessing us in Daddy's absence.

Becky and I spent part of the day Friday in the temple with her best friend, Tera. When we were through I proceeded to put some names on the prayer roll. Lately I have been doing that and many times I just go right down the roster of children and include all of you. Grandma Richards said their temple president said we should not hesitate putting anyone's name on the roll that we are concerned about and so since learning that I have tried to do that. Today I have been wondering if I should have put one '89 Corsica on the prayer roll, too. If Mary Fielding Smith can ask for her ox to be administered to, I can ask for a car to be healed.

A few weeks ago Grandma and Grandpa Richards called and mentioned that they were starting to go through some of their possessions and give them to family





members since they are anticipating having to move to a condominium in these next couple years. One of the things that Grandpa had that was very dear to him was a trumpet that he had purchased when he was about 13. I expressed to Mom an interest in the trumpet since Daddy has been active in the community orchestra lately and has been using a trumpet he picked up at a pawn shop. Just a short time after expressing this interest Grandpa called me back and said that he would love for Daddy to have his trumpet, the only condition being that it stay in the family. I have been so excited about this gift. The kids and I have kept it a secret from him for the past few weeks, waiting for Father's Day. We have done all we could to arouse Daddy's curiosity about it without giving away the surprise which wasn't too hard since he didn't even know Grandpa Arch played the trumpet and even had one.

When Grandpa and Grandma Larsen went to St. George for Miken's wedding, they brought the trumpet back with them and

shared in the surprise. We presented it to Daddy the night before he left for Woodbadge. He was totally amazed at this beautiful gift. It is over sixty years old and in excellent condition and was one of the first things my Dad ever purchased with money he earned himself. It has been maintained over the years and will need very little work on it to make it usable. Even the case is in good condition and includes some nice accessories. Daddy nearly took it apart piece by piece checking it out and then played it for us. Thanks, Grandpa Arch for the beautiful gift.

Speaking of Grandpas--today Grandpa and Grandma Larsen came over to visit and bring Tim his birthday card. It gave me a chance to give him a Father's Day hug and express our love to him for all the joy and blessings that he has brought into our lives. He is such a fine man, full of faith and good works, and a fitting example to all of you children. It has been a distinct blessing in my life to have been raised and tutored and influenced by my two good fathers and I pay high tribute to both of them for their lives of service and devotion.

Yesterday was Tim's birthday and although we tried to have fun, it was still a little lonely with Dad gone, the kids at work, and the neighbors out of town. Last night Paul invited some friends, the neighbors came home, Becky and her date joined in, and we had a basketball party in the driveway that lasted from 7-12a.m. Every carload of kids that drove by dropped in to play for a while and Becky's date suggested that we charge admission. Although I worried about the noise I was grateful that Tim had a great time and felt like there had been a celebration.

Today my thoughts are on memories of two bald babies that we brought home from the hospital on Father's Day 25 years ago and about all the chaos they created in our home for many years thereafter. Thank goodness for that life-altering event! Other

than those first difficult years they have been a source of joy and satisfaction!

June 28, 1995

[Dad] Grandpa & Grandma Richards have been here since Sunday night and we have tried to give as much time to them as possible, so we have been thrown off our family letter schedule. It has really been nice to have them here and be able to spend some time visiting with them. Sue has also been able to do some family history work with her mother here to tutor her on the computer.

I got home from Woodbadge Saturday afternoon and Sue helped me spread out about 20 tarps to dry and then refold. We went to a wedding reception in Pingree for Hal Baird's daughter that night and I was amazed with how young she and her husband seemed. It is always good to see some of our old friends and acquaintances that we don't normally see except at receptions or funerals.

Speaking of funerals, Randy Cox's mother died over the weekend and her funeral was yesterday. It was so refreshing to sense the closeness and faithfulness of her 8 sons. The choir sang and we invited any of the family who wanted to join us. We had several grandkids and a daughter-in-law sing with the choir and it was beautiful—in keeping with the rest of the service. She had planned the program before she died and was also able to get all the sons together about three weeks ago. The mood was a good balance between a somber funeral and festive farewell for someone finding passage back home to her eternal companion and her daughter who died in infancy.



Sunday was Emily's farewell and also ward conference. So we were stretched to try to do justice to both occasions. We really enjoyed the time at Gary & Linda's (and the food of course!) and the chance to visit for a while. It whetted our appetite for the family reunion next week.

Woodbadge last week was wonderful. We had 45 participants. It was a lot of work because of the rainy weather and everything that had to be done to help them learn the 11 leadership skills that are taught and implemented in their ticket of goals for when they return home. It is truly an inspired program and we had many rich spiritual experiences and made many lasting friendships with 60 people, including the staff. I was even able to find seven minutes to earn my broken match award—by starting a fire with a bow and drill and then with flint and steel within 15 minutes.

Emphasis is given to three new concepts this year—1) Woodbadge is a safe haven, everyone should feel totally secure physically and mentally and everything should be positive and “praiseworthy”. (We

don't even do any degrading cheers like the watermelon cheer, only positive ones like the cheese cheer—grate, grate, grate.) 2) Are we delivering the promise? In the Scout Handbook it says something about the outdoor adventure of Scouting and we evaluate whether we are fulfilling that promise or just experiencing sports activities and cultural hall Scouting. 3) The most significant addition was Reflection. After each learning experience we paused for a brief reflection of feelings and attitudes about the experience to help deepen and solidify the learning from each experience and activity. What a powerful tool to help get beyond the surface superficiality and to get the vantage point of each person's impressions and feelings about the experience. I appreciated the remembrances on Father's Day. DAD

[Mom] As Daddy mentioned, we just sent off Grandpa and Grandma Richards after a three day visit. They are driving to Ellafair's today and will continue on to Charles' tomorrow and then Lisa and Nate's. Grandma said that this would probably be the last driving trip they would take since Grandpa's just not able to drive much anymore because of his Parkinson's. He was noticeably stiffer than I have ever seen him and he knows that it is only a matter of time until he loses the mobility he now enjoys. It's so frustrating but he and Grandma are preparing themselves for the time he requires help. They are in the process of locating a small condominium in Richland so they can be close to family.

Today we are getting Tim ready for his super activity tomorrow. He has been working hard to be ready and is downstairs right now packing his gear. It is good to have Daddy back. It seemed like everything we owned needed repairing by the time he returned. Paul is in Provo staying with Steve and Bonnie while he attends music camp; he called last night and said that he was enjoying it. We

appreciate the Provo siblings providing a place to stay.

Steve and Bonnie dropped in on their trip to Jackson Hole last week and we enjoyed their visit. Bonnie and I sat in the swing with SaraKay and Rachel while the boys played ball. Last Friday Mike, Paul, and Tim and some friends went to Provo for a quick visit and delivered Mike's friend to college and Paul to camp. They spent Friday evening with Becky and her date and then went to a water park for most of Saturday. They really had a great time except for getting sunburned. Mike and Tim have been pretty miserable.

I was grateful to have my parents here for a few days. Grandma Richards helped me get acquainted with the computer and how to print out group sheets and organize my book. I was able to have some good chats with both Grandpa and Grandma and continue to appreciate their influence in my life. Sunday was fun although very hectic with ward conference and all its attendant responsibilities. Emily and family did such a nice job at the farewell. They are en route today to the MTC. It won't be long before we'll be welcoming John home. Mom

July 2, 1995

This week we will be leaving for Denver for the Larsen reunion so Dad and I decided to get this written and sent early. This past week was very busy. Tim left early Thursday morning for his super activity to Jackson Hole and vicinity. Paul was already absent since he started his music camp last Sunday, staying with Steve and Bonnie. It was a pretty small family most nights for supper with just four of us.

Thursday Daddy made a trip to Island Park to collect some of the gear they used at Woodbadge. I knew it was going to be a long day and decided to take some of the neighbor children to the school playground for a while after supper. When I arrived

home, Daddy was rushing around getting dressed in his Sunday best. He received a phone call from the council president informing him that there had been a serious accident at the Salmon River High Adventure Base (SRHAB) and he needed to go to the Idaho Falls Hospital to meet with the family of the accident victim and be there when the boy arrived. A 15 year old boy got his kayak wedged into a log jam and it was difficult to get him out. Several personnel were there working to rescue him but it still took nearly 40 minutes and he lost consciousness towards the end due to hypothermia. They got him to the Salmon hospital but couldn't get his temperature up and then flew him to Idaho Falls where he died several hours later. Daddy can fill in the details.

Friday Daddy left for the camp to help with some comfort and counseling of staff involved. He arrived home late Saturday afternoon, Tim arrived home about six, and Paul arrived about eight. It was nice to hear about everybody's week and how things went. We are grateful that everyone is home safe and we are together again.

One event that is having an impact on our lives lately is the upcoming divorce of our good friends and neighbors, Roy and Daryl Davis. This past week we approached Roy about the pasture situation since we have leased the pasture to them for the past six or seven years and Roy has done the watering for us as a part of the arrangement. He told us that it was Daryl's responsibility now and so we tried to work it out with her. It was complicated by Daddy's travels and eventually it ended up being Daryl and me doing it. We've had a problem keeping water off the sewer system when the pasture is flooded and although we've had two loads of dirt brought in to heap over the system, it still was a worry. It takes several hours of pushing the water to get the entire acreage covered and by the time we had it watered,

it was about 6 inches deep on our back lawn corner and I was a nervous wreck worrying about it seeping into our system. Daddy is going to get another load of dirt brought in this week to secure things. That should solve the problem and make watering easier on us. The home and acreage owned by the Davis's has been listed for sale. We are heartsick about it all but I guess there are problems that can't be reconciled. They have been good neighbors and we will hate to lose them.

When Paul was giving me a rundown on his music camp, he commented that it wasn't very good for his self esteem since everyone he met seemed so talented. I told him that that is the disadvantage of going to BYU; there are so many exceptional people there. That was also the advantage of going to BYU; you are lifted and inspired by the excellence you see. If you can put your pride aside and enjoy associating with that caliber of people, you will grow from the experience.

Our thoughts have been with Andrea and her recovery today. We look forward to our time with Steph and Linds and family the last week in July.

[Dad] From your mother's account you can see that last week was a pretty normal hectic week. The accident at SRHAB was certainly a sad incident to be involved in, but it was also a testimony building one to see the Comforter at work, the resilience of people of faith, and to feel the reality of spirits. One of the basic lessons in operating a kayak is which way to lean when coming to a dangerous sand bar or log jam. By leaning away from the danger and into the current, the force of the current pushes your kayak against the jam and you just bounce off and usually wash right past the danger. If you lean toward the danger you are fighting the current and it pushes you right into the jam with the kayak low enough to get caught. An important lesson to remember with regards

to Satan's pitfalls—it is important which way you lean! Mitch Skinner leaned the wrong way and it cost him his life.

The staff members that were with him put their lives on the line in attempting to save him. They were able to keep his head above water enough that I don't believe he drowned. I think he died of hypothermia and adrenalin rush. The family is LDS and the parents were certainly blessed with the Comforter as their son arrived at the Idaho Falls hospital from Salmon and the doctors began working on him. Finally they ask us in to administer to him. We could feel a definite void with regard to his spirit and the father gave him a release blessing instead of a get well blessing.

As I went to the SRHAB the next day and visited with some of the staff that were having a struggle it was apparent that they had followed proper procedures and had done everything they could to save his life. The water is extremely high and swift this year and some people expressed concern as to whether we should even be on the river while conditions are the way they are. I felt that with wisdom and proper safeguards that we should keep on operating. There is always an element of risk at camp and especially at a high adventure base. I didn't feel that we are taking unnecessary risks with our program. I hope each of you to know how much I love you. I also want you to know how much I love the Gospel and know that it is true. God does hear and answer our prayers—not always the way we want them—but he does answer them nonetheless. The Comforter is very real and to feel his arms around you in times of loss and stress is another witness of Heavenly Father's love and concern.

July 10, 1995

[Mom] I would like to share some of my impressions of this past week as we joined

with other members of the Larsen clan in Colorado. We left Wednesday afternoon, picking Mike up at Kesler's on our way and traveled to Rock Springs, Wyoming where we spent the night. Thursday we drove on to Colorado, following Mark's detailed instructions to get to his cabin in the mountains above Denver. We arrived safe and sound about 2:30. Rita's parents own two very comfortable log cabins which are situated side by side in a small wooded valley next to a beautiful stream of water. Both cabins have hot and cold running water, modern bathrooms, kitchen appliances and several bedrooms. They are old cabins, the one having been in the family for over 50 years. As you can imagine, they are very rustic and have lots of fun antiques, rock fireplaces, covered front porches, and other features that give you a feeling of "roughing it" and yet they are modern enough that we were very comfortable and fixing meals and keeping clean was not a chore. The little stream that usually is a spot to dangle your feet, was a bloated torrent of spring runoff and completely off limits to old and young alike, but the sound of the rushing water was a pleasant backdrop for our meals, visiting, and sleeping. Since Dad and AlvaLu, Karen and Jim, and Staff and Kathy had their RV's, we were given the master bedroom in the second cabin and enjoyed the comfortable accommodations. The boy cousins all slept in a nearby tent ("the Party Tent") and Mark and Rita's family, and Jeanie and Bethany had the bedrooms in the other cabin. Gary and Linda arrived a day late and set up a tent also. All of the meals were served on an open deck on the back of our cabin, complete with a large pine tree canopy and bird feeder that attracted beautiful humming birds. We spent a morning hiking the Rockies, ate delicious meals, visited a small resort town, Estes Park, attended a Rockies baseball game at Coors stadium in Denver and visited to our hearts content. It was a wonderful opportunity to be together. It



also gave the extended family a chance to see Jessica and give some support in that situation. She has improved a great deal since her accident nearly a year ago, but she is still severely limited in what she can do. She is aware of what is going on around her and responds with a smile or other facial gesture. She also can read and write and often expresses herself by writing her responses on a small tablet that is attached to her wheelchair. She has limited use of her hands and legs and depends on her family for most of her needs. She is learning to feed herself with the use of an arm brace that is attached to her chair. Although she is unable to speak, she has attended school part-time this past year and maintained her 4.0 GPA. Mark and Rita and kids are so loving and kind with her and it was heartwarming to see the growth in their family as they have met the challenges of caring for her. Watching Jessica and seeing her limitations made me aware of how grateful I should be for the ability to walk and talk and move about. Grandpa Larsen administered to her Saturday evening at the family talent night. It was a touching situation and one that I am sure will remain with us as a time of strengthening of family bonds. The entire

time seemed to be sweeter and more spiritual than I ever remember before. I guess trials have a way of enhancing our relationship with Deity and in this situation, I could see many blessings that have come as a result of this accident. It was hard to see Jessica struggling with her inadequacies and feeling so dependent. The cousins did all they could to include her especially when we

hiked. The boys about carried her and the wheelchair up the mountain trail until it became too steep to continue.

At the business meeting Saturday Gary was given the assignment for next year's reunion (97). It was also mentioned that a special fast will be held in August for Jessica and also for Rick and Terry who are struggling with marital problems. They are in need of our love and prayers right now. We headed home Sunday morning and felt rewarded for our efforts to go the the reunion. When we stopped in Rock Springs for gas, Daddy indicated that we had a problem. He had noticed some liquid dripping from the car and realized that we had a leak. He filled up the transmission fluid and we had prayer and took off for home. About every hour and a half we had to refill our fluid and so we limped home and finally pulled into our yard about 8:30 that night. Monday we took the van in and found out that it had a serious problem that would take several days to fix. Thank goodness it didn't happen en route to Denver or we would have missed the reunion entirely and been sitting in some motel waiting on a car repair. We have a lot to be grateful for.

I received a call from Grandma Ilene last night saying that they've returned from their trip and that Aunt Deneice is there with them for the week while her kids attend BYU EFY. Grandpa Arch has taken a turn for the worse and his feet and ankles and knee are getting really bad. He had an appointment with the doctor today. He will be released from his responsibilities in the temple and they are getting ready to sell their home. They purchased a lot in Aunt Lisa's ward while they were in Washington and Nate will begin construction of a home for them as soon as their property in Santa Clara is sold. Their lives are changing and I'm sure it isn't easy for either of them. Grandpa has always been so athletic and self reliant and it is hard to now become increasingly dependent. I am grateful that they will be close to Nate and Lisa and Charles. Remember them in your prayers.

We are excited for Stephani and Linds' visit and have big plans including a trip to the Tautphus Park zoo and Jackson's Trout Farm. Steph says that if we get bored we can keep busy chasing Joshua around from one disaster to another. In 40 days John will be winging his way home from Taiwan. This Sunday Mike will be presented to be made an Elder.

Becky is enjoying her experiences at the MTC. Tim and Paul continue to keep themselves busy with worming and mowing and tomorrow Daddy leaves with Mike and Paul for their super activity to the Manti Pageant, Temple Square, Legacy, Raging Waters, and other church sites. SaraKay celebrated her birthday

yesterday (a day late) with a small party of neighborhood friends. We have demolished part of our patio and are ready to put in some fill dirt and perhaps a deck in the months ahead. The garden needs weeding, the lawn needs watering, the garage needs sweeping, and dinner needs fixing so I better run. Mom

[Dad] There are a few things I would like to share with you also about the reunion. First of all, the trip over was delightful with plenty of good food and conversation with the six of us. The car ran fine and we listened to a couple novels on tape as we traveled which helped to pass the time. There were many special times and conversations at the reunion. One that was quite delightful was being able to go to a Rockies game. It was quite an exciting game with several home runs and quite a bit of action during the first several innings. Before the game started a large squirrel ran out onto the field and the game was delayed in starting by about 10 minutes as that squirrel was chased down and removed. Because the team they were playing was from Canada, both national anthems were sung. We quite enjoyed the people around us and with my binoculars



had a great view of home plate and all the action. On the way out of the stadium, Tim asked me if they had sold enough beer to pay for the stadium already—there was quite a bit of it flowing. We enjoyed the hike we took and being able to see one of the Scout Camps belonging to the Denver Area Council that was just a few miles from the cabins. It was especially touching to have Jessica along on the hike, have her walk part of the way, and have the teenage boy cousins hauling her along the trail in her wheelchair. It was one of the most enjoyable hikes I have been on because of the slower pace and being able to enjoy the sights and the visiting instead of rushing to keep up and hurrying to get back.

One of the most enjoyable times was Saturday night as we had an adult meeting with my siblings and their spouses and Dad and Alva Lu and the ensuing program with all of us gathered in Mark & Rita's cabin. I don't think I've ever felt more unity and an outpouring of love and concern for the family as I felt in those meetings. We discussed whether we should continue having the reunion and Gary quoted from a Reader's Digest article he had read that the cousins are the glue that holds a family

together. Love, DAD

July 17, 1995

[Mom] I just came in from weeding the garden to take a break from the hot sunshine although I'm not complaining. When I called Shauntel last night to check on Randy (he has been very sick for the last week) she mentioned that they had experienced over 100 plus humidity. She said that when they get out of their air conditioned car, their glasses would fog up with the heat outside. Things have settled down a bit now, but maybe Steph and Linds are grateful they are visiting Utah/Idaho these next few weeks and don't have to endure the heat wave that has moved to the Eastern U.S. We've had some beautiful weather...not too hot or cold and there are always the cool evenings that give us a reprieve from even the hottest summer days.

Daddy had a rather hectic week last week with an evening rappelling with his Priests and then a two-day super activity to Salt Lake, Manti for the pageant, and Raging Waters. He had a good group go and they all seemed to have a good time. Mike and four other of our ward priests were

presented last night at stake priesthood meeting to be ordained Elders so this was a "last hurrah" for the graduating seniors in the quorum. Mike led the singing in stake priesthood meeting and was asked, along with some of his friends, extemporaneously, to sing "Ye Elders of Israel" on the program. There were 19 young men presented and most of them have been



classmates of Mike's. It was a sweet experience.

Saturday was spent working around the yard. Daddy broke up much of the back patio with a sledge hammer and he, Paul, and Tim loaded the pieces of cement into the Toyota and took it to the dump on the other side of Blackfoot. It was hot, backbreaking work and I wondered how we would ever get the area completely cleaned up at that rate. Randy Cox called and asked if we could take delivery on our yearly pallet/firewood load and we agreed. When he came and saw our project, he offered to lift the big pieces of concrete with his fork lift since he was using it in the neighborhood delivering wood. He quite handily lifted the slabs and piled them in our driveway, later returning to load them on his flatbed truck and take them to the dump. It saved us hours and hours of time and work.

I was making strawberry jam and bread and took some over later for their family--small payment for the BIG favor he did for us but he and Pam were very sweet in their acceptance of our offering and refused to take payment for the equipment use. Today the boys have been shoveling dirt from a load we got from Bill Scott and piling it next to the foundation so that we can build the

sunken area back up and remove the danger of water damage to the basement.

Daddy also rototilled our garden and helped me get it looking less like a jungle. We picked a few raspberries and had them on waffles with whipped cream for supper. It was a very satisfying day.

Thursday when Daddy and the Priests were in Provo, they brought Becky's car back with them. It continues to be unreliable, stalling on her occasionally until she never knows if she is going to arrive at her destination or not. We have had it looked at and fixed three times since buying it in late April and the problems persist. Ron Mangum, who we purchased it from, says he can't fix it if it doesn't have the problem while he is driving it and we can't seem to time its problem so that it occurs on demand. We finally told Ron that we need to trade cars and get into one that Becky can depend on. This has been such a headache over the past few months and we are anxious to get it resolved. Our own cars are also giving us trouble right now and we are debating just what to do; trade them off or try to fix them and hold off a while longer. To coin an old phrase, "Happiness is a car that runs."

In my phoning last night I learned that Steve and Bonnie are expecting a baby in October! They thought that I already knew since Paul had been with them for music camp and they thought that surely he had noticed that Bonnie wasn't her usual slim self, but when I questioned him later about it, he was as surprised as I was and said he hadn't noticed anything unusual. Either Bonnie is small or Paul is blind or maybe a little of both.





Anyway, congratulations to Steve and Bonnie!

We are assuming that Steph and Linds arrived safely Saturday evening in Salt Lake; we are looking forward to some time with them next week. Jonie said that she is planning to get job training in Minneapolis come September. They had a big storm come through the other night that nearly uprooted trees and threw their new trampoline against a tree and bent some of the metal frame.

Andrea is on the mend and they are enjoying their newest arrival! She and David are involved in some missionary work with a Korean couple that lives next door and they took them to church last Sunday. Their investigators were so excited about it that they stayed for the whole block of meetings! Becky is enjoying her MTC experience, Emily is flying out this Wednesday for Ohio, and Paul is happy about his 32 hour week at Kesler's.

Last Saturday David Hammond and Carl Anderson dropped by to visit and ask

exactly when John will be home. I do pretty well with shutting out the thoughts of when he will be arriving (35 days) until these friends keep reminding me. His letters are upbeat and positive although we could stand a little more detail.

[Dad] Yesterday was a good full Sunday. With morning meetings, block, home teaching, choir, and so on, it doesn't seem like much of a day of rest. We had a lesson in Priesthood meeting on work and I would like to share some of the quotes from that lesson with you. *"I never did a day's work in my life—it was all fun."* (Thomas Edison) *"God sells us all things at the price of labor."* (Leonardo da Vinci) *"Work is a spiritual necessity."* (Neal A. Maxwell) *"Each will find that*

happiness in this world mainly depends on the work he does, and the way in which he does it." (Brigham Young) *"The privilege to work is a gift."* (David O. McKay)

"There is no way of going through life without consuming someone's work—our own or others. We can't eat without consuming someone's work. We can't travel without consuming someone's work. We can't use any substance or accept any service without accepting someone's work. No matter what nature provides, or what men are able to make machines do, work is always somehow involved in the process of bringing the final product to people," (Richard L. Evans)

"I've been grateful for the experience I had under the tutelage of my own father to wash with Castile soap the harnesses and grease them to preserve them. I learned to paint the picket fence, the water tank, the carriage shed, the granary, the buggy and the wagon, and finally the house. And since the days when I wore the occasional blister on my hands, I have not been sorry



I had effectively and efficiently to accomplish the goals at hand. Those same feelings have carried over into other work—church positions and responsibilities in the priesthood, volunteer assignments, community work, providing insurance coverage for a family to meet their needs within their available resources, finding money or resources to help provide the values of Scouting to more boys or more effectively to those we are already serving. Probably the greatest accomplishment is our wonderful family—your goals, accomplishments, and attitudes fill me with righteous pride!

for those experiences.”
(Spencer W. Kimball)

“I know how you felt because the same thing happens to almost everybody. They feel this sudden burst in them of wanting to do some great thing. They feel a wonderful happiness, but then it passes because they have said, ‘No, I can’t do that. It’s impossible.’ Whenever something in you says ‘It’s impossible,’ remember to take a careful look. See if it isn’t really God asking you to grow an inch, or a foot, or a mile that you may come to a fuller life.” (Richard Thurman)

Aren’t those beautiful thoughts about work? I couldn’t help thinking about the attitudes that I learned about work from my father. Take moving pipe for example—satisfaction and challenge in bettering my previous time or in how straight I could move my lines. In planting potatoes or grain, plowing, cutting hay or grain, finding fulfillment in straight symmetrical swathes or furrows and being able to use what tools



One of the most rewarding aspects of our super activity last week was the rappelling. It was the first time I had had a chance to do that since 1990 when I went to Woodbadge and we were rappelling down a 50-60 foot cliff when my feet slid out from under me and I plummeted to the ground. The fellow on the belay line was just able to stop me as my feet reached the ground.

Last week we were instructed initially on a short slope and then we rappelled off about 150 foot cliff. We each had several turns and some of the boys went 5 or 6 times and really enjoyed the experience.

The next morning we went to the Air Force Museum near Layton, and then to the Church Office Building for an appointment with the Executive Secretary of the Aaronic Priesthood Committee, and then on to the Mormon Miracle Pageant in Manti. The next day we spent at Raging Waters. The boys had a great time, and so did Bishop Godfrey and I. We had some great visits and were thankful for the time together. The Manti Pageant was a splendid event and certainly conveyed a great appreciation for the consequences of Joseph Smith's foray into the woods to pray. Love, DAD

July 24, 1995

[Mom] Happy Pioneer Day! Daddy and Tim left early this morning for the Salmon River High Adventure Base where he will be the director for two days while the regular director takes a couple of days off to celebrate his wedding anniversary. Tim was excited to get a chance to learn to kayak and float the Salmon. Mike and Paul have other demands on them and weren't able to go. Daddy will be back tomorrow night. Steph and Linds will be here tomorrow



afternoon and stay a week. We are excited and hope all our plans work out well. We have already found out that we won't be able to go fishing at Jackson Trout Farm since the wet spring caused such an infestation of mosquitoes and deer flies that they have had to close down the facility. We have been hunting for a dog for SaraKay and hoping to have it by the time Katie and Sam got here but we have not been successful. We called on one ad in the paper and drove half way to Timbukto (is that really a place?) to find it only to be disappointed. A young girl took us to a cage behind her house which had three grown dogs; two German shorthairs and one Doberman Pincer. The one they were giving away was a shorthair. I looked at it, Tim looked at it, and SaraKay said, "Can we get it? Please, can we get it?" and I told the girl that we would think about it and call her later.

When we got in the car, Tim revealed his true feelings about the matter. "That was one, ugly dog!" I had to agree and we both convinced SaraKay that we ought to continue looking. The search goes on.

It was nice to have last week to get caught up around the yard and garden. I've had my first picking of raspberries and done several batches of jam. Daddy spent the day Saturday cleaning and organizing the garage and putting away many of his camping supplies. We purchased a couple of small pine trees and got them planted and did some spraying of weeds around the fence line. It seems good to be home long enough and take care of things. We performed a song yesterday in sacrament meeting and have one more performance before we take our August break.

It's nice to see August a little bit open and know we will have time to get ready for John's return. Yesterday, following the block, Mike was ordained an Elder. Grandpa and Grandma Larsen came and it was special to see Allan and Daddy and

many of Mike's previous leaders join in the ordination. Daddy also gave him a beautiful blessing and encouraged him to continue preparing for his upcoming mission. Originally Mike was going to try to leave in December but since learning of the complications on one of his scholarships, he is going to wait until he completes his first year and then go in May. We've done some adjusting on his housing but I think that it is a wise plan and he will benefit from the delay. Mike wanted me to let you know that he is taking Sally Ogden to the temple this week for some baptisms for names Grandma Richards has submitted. After the baptisms are completed, Daddy and I will get the other work done. I'm looking forward to this experience.

I've visited with most of you this past week on the phone and thought I'd give a quick update of what's happening. As I have mentioned, Steph and Linds have been in

Utah with Lind's family this past week although it hasn't been much of a vacation for Lindsay since he has some tight deadlines to meet for IBM and has worked much of his first week. Tomorrow they will come here and Linds will do some hiking in the Tetons while Steph and I watch kids and talk nonstop.

Shauntel and Randy have been house and pet-sitting for some friends and have some interesting stories to relate regarding their adventures including the dog being sprayed by a skunk. They will be glad to return to their own turf and get things back to normal. Randy is feeling much better after suffering with some sort of virus and Shauntel is trying to stay well. School starts again for them the middle of August and they are wringing all the enjoyment they can out of these last few weeks of freedom.



Jonie is working at the Bingo hall but has had several interesting job opportunities and is wrestling with the decision of what to do now that she has her accounting degree.



Steve and Bonnie are enjoying a break from their hectic schedule before Steve returns in September to finish up. He has been job hunting and has located a few possibilities. Rachel is trying to walk and keeps them busy with her antics.

David is finishing up his internship and Andrea continues to strengthen following Angela's arrival. Laurel seems to be adjusting to this newest family member and is getting the hang of being "mama's little helper".

Becky is dating someone she quite likes--yes, you read it right-- Becky is dating

someone she quite likes and we are excited to have her excited. His name is Chris (Mike says the only Chris he's ever met that he likes is Bonnies' brother-in-law) and he is from Georgia. We have our reservations about someone from Georgia but Becky says he doesn't have an accent so maybe he's okay. I am sure if Chris is as neat as Becky is telling us that we will eventually learn his last name and maybe even get to meet him.

John's flight schedule came today; he will arrive in Idaho Falls on August 22 at 7 p.m. He has a layover in Salt Lake but since most of you will be able to come for the homecoming the 27th, I didn't know if you'd make it to the airport. We'll do some figuring as it gets closer.

Mike is cramming all the fun he can into his summer, Paul is enjoying his organ lessons, working at Keslers, the cemetery, painting for Jeff Cook, and helping Tim mow. SaraKay started piano lessons. I'm not sure that I can stand having a beginning piano student one more time but Grandpa Arch said I have to, so I'm trying to act like I'm happy about it.

I was wondering the other day what event I am the most excited about; getting Mike, Becky, and John into college or getting SaraKay into kindergarten. It's kind of a toss-up between the two. Grandpa Richards is doing much better and has strengthened this week. They think he may have had a flu bug that made him dizzy. They have their home up for sale and are continuing to pack things up a little at a time.

August 7, 1995

[Dad] Sorry about missing last week but it was overwhelming to have Steph and Linds and family here (just kidding). It doesn't seem possible but it is--two weeks from tomorrow we pick John up at the Idaho

Falls Airport. Bishop asked me yesterday if we were counting the days. What a thrill it is to have such hard-working successful contributions to the missionary force of the Church as we've had. I'm learning to enjoy the stake's policy of no meetings on Fast Sunday. It seemed so restful yesterday to be able to prepare my Priesthood lesson and take the time to go through some of my old files of materials relating to the lesson on the Word of Wisdom. I had a full and successful week last week. My work was rewarding; I'm happy to have such a diverse job.

Saturday was my favorite day. SaraKay helped me spray for spiders around the house and under the eaves. Then I sprayed the apple trees and fine tuned the watering and did a bunch of repairs. DAD

[Mom] We missed writing last week due to the frenetic pace we kept while enjoying our visit with Stephani and Linds and three. We did it all from going swimming at Heise, going to the Tautphaus Park Zoo, visiting with Grandpa and Grandma Larsen, and going water skiing with Uncle Gary. Stephani, Dad, and I even got in a temple session and did the initiatory work for the names Grandma Richards submitted. It was fun to get acquainted with our Indiana grandkids and see how they are growing. Katie reads and plays the piano so well, Sam impressed us all with his vocabulary, and Joshua kept us on our toes as we chased him from one end of the house and yard to the other every waking moment.

One morning while Paul was sitting at the bar eating his breakfast, Sam climbed up next to him and whispered in his ear, "Did you know that people who study dinosaurs

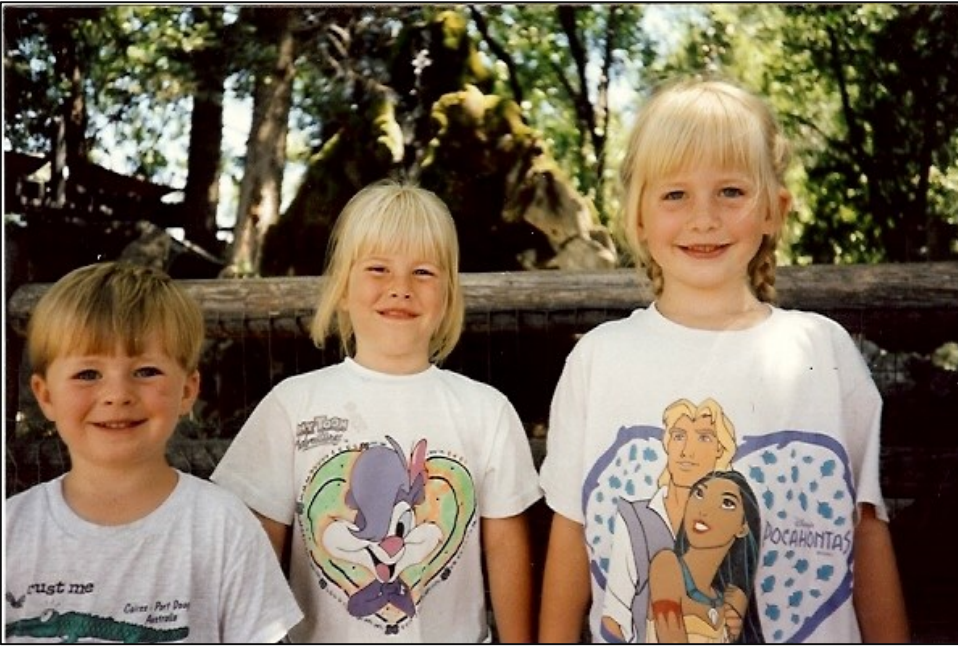
are called paleontologist?" Well, Paul had to admit he hadn't recently been thinking



about it but that he appreciated Sam sharing that interesting piece of information with him. We thoroughly enjoyed our time together and hoped we hadn't worn them out.

I tried to call each of you yesterday. When I reached Steve, he told me that he and Bonnie spent the afternoon in the emergency room of the hospital. Bonnie had an attack of gall stones. She was given an injection and sent home with strict instructions for what she could and could not eat. The doctors are hoping they can solve the problem and avoid surgery. Bonnie's pregnancy is moving along fine and everything seems to be okay with the baby.

David is finishing up his internship and will be starting classes the 21st of August. Shauntel and Randy will be resuming school that same week. Becky came home for her class reunion on Saturday and then left Sunday morning to attend the homecoming of a missionary companion in Salt Lake. Her visit gave us a chance to ask her about her romance with Chris. It's hard



when we don't know him, but as Grandma Ilene commented, "I think Becky has dated enough boys that she pretty much knows what she likes and what she doesn't." True.

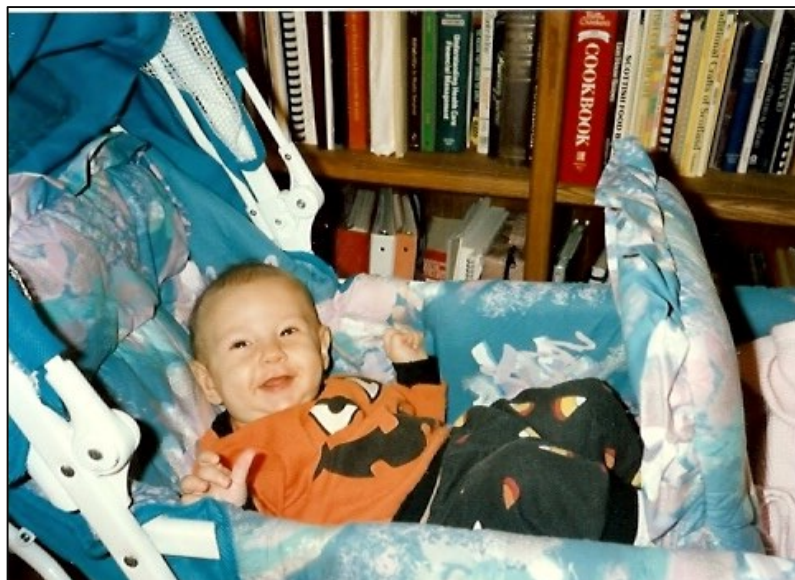
Mike is at the "this is the last time" stage now. Yesterday after testimony meeting, Paul commented, "This was the last time you will attend a testimony meeting in the Moreland Sixth Ward until after your mission." It seems like we just went through that stage with John a while ago and now he is nearly home.

Sunday evening Grandpa and Grandma Richards called to say they had two offers on their home and had accepted one and taken earnest money on it. Their schedule (Plan A) is to move the week following John's farewell, attend the Richards' reunion at Lagoon on Saturday, proceed onto Washington on Sunday, and store their belongings while Nate builds them a home in the Richland

area. My part of Plan A will be to help them with final packing and cleaning.

Last night after talking with all of you on the phone, I went to bed and fell into a deep sleep. Before the night was over, I had rehashed all the upcoming events including meeting flights, meeting Chris, moving Grandma and Grandpa, planning a homecoming, cooking brisket, welcoming a

new grandbaby, leading the singing at stake conference (I've just been called as the stake music chairman), helping with the Tiger Ear fair booth, and sending SaraKay off to college (I mean kindergarten). By the time I awoke this morning, I was fit to be tied and wondered if I should cancel August. Then I reminded myself of what fun this is going to be. We have prayed for these good things to happen and I want to enjoy every minute!

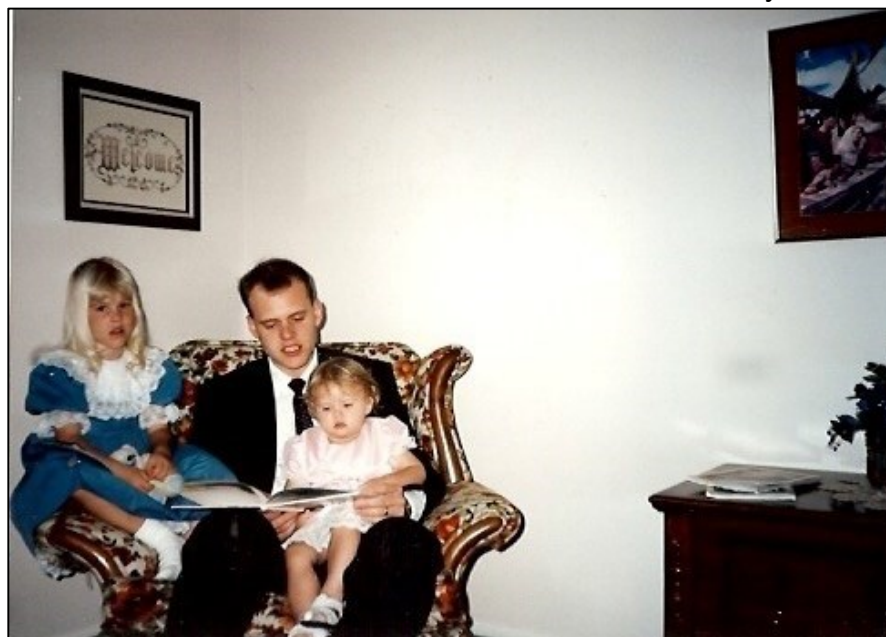


P.S. Tim wants everyone to know that next week he will hit the \$1,000 mark with his summer earnings. He really has worked hard at a variety of odd jobs and we're proud of him for his efforts. He is planning for the day that he can take over Mike's bedroom and expand his operation. He is getting to be quite the comedian and although I try not to laugh at his jokes, often I can't help myself and I do.

Last week we got an early Christmas present from Lindsay. We were short a few pillows with the influx of company and so I would go around after the little kids went to sleep and steal their pillows, giving them to those who were awake. One night Mike came upstairs complaining that his pillow was missing and I explained that I had taken it to loan to Nate (Linds' friend from UT). Mike then took Tim's and Tim found



out and took someone else's. One night when I put Katie to bed, she asked where her big pillow was because the one she had now felt like a sheet instead of a pillow. Lindsay decided to take matters into his own hands and bought our family an early Christmas: 6 big pillows. They are wonderful and we are enjoying them immensely. We were laughing about some of the things we own that need replacing and Paul commented about our cars, particularly the Toyota and Hornet. He said, "Every time we gas them up, it doubles their value!"



August 14, 1995

[Mom] I called Steve and Bonnie last night to see how they had gotten along last week. They had a three day Johnson reunion with Bonnie's family at Alpine. Steve said that it had been a wonderful vacation for them although they spent another evening in the emergency room. The doctor's have given



things ready for the Tiger Ear Booth although I think it is getting a little easier each year.

I am in the thick of planning for the Homecoming

Bonnie some medication that seems to be helping her with the pain. She is on a strict NO fat diet which they hope will work. I'm sure they would appreciate our prayers in their behalf.

and Saturday night cookout. I'm trying not to think about John but it is hard since everywhere we go people ask us about his return.

We spent nearly every evening last week watching Mike, Paul, and Tim in a regional softball tournament. Although we didn't go into the tournament with a very strong record, we continued to win and eventually took third place. Mike played first base, Paul center field and Tim, catcher. The coach had the three of them batting one after another and it always put me on edge when the game was tight and the three of them were up to bat. Thank goodness they usually got a base hit or managed a walk. Mike was quite the first baseman, utilizing his phenomenal frog legs vertical jump more than once to retrieve a wild throw. Paul had some awesome catches of high flies and Tim, the youngest member of the team, did a good job, too. SaraKay had a group of friends who attended with their parents, and she enjoyed running wild and climbing on the bleachers. We are all going to have to make some adjustments once school starts in two weeks. If we were on our usual schedule, the kids would be going back tomorrow but because of the extensive remodeling, they have until September 7th. The junior high and middle schools won't be starting until October 15! Glad that doesn't affect our family. Daddy is running his yearly marathon getting

Yesterday I was set apart for my new calling. The stake presidency was so sweet to us and commented on you kids and your accomplishments and goodness. When President Bowman set me apart, he mentioned that I was blessed to be the mother of many choice and valiant children



and to have been raised in a home where I had been nurtured in the gospel by parents who loved the Lord. I really appreciated the sweet blessing. I'm excited about some of the projects that I have proposed and already we are putting some of them in motion. I was released from my Merrie Miss class. I will miss the girls; they are at such a wonderful stage of life and so full of eagerness to do what is right.

I have been thinking about how much joy is inherent in daily living despite the problems we face. Last week at the games, sitting amidst neighbors and friends, feeling the camaraderie of the spectators and team, enjoying the game and the sights and sounds of a pleasant summer evening, I asked myself, "Where in the world would I rather be right now than here next to Daddy watching our boys play ball?" Nowhere! It was one of those "moments in time" when you revel in the many blessings you enjoy. I had another moment like that this



morning as Paul, Tim, SaraKay and I picked raspberries together at the Christiansen's. It was a beautiful morning and fun to be with the kids. The bushes were so tall that we couldn't see each other but we visited and picked and gloried in the red ripe berries and in the goodness of neighbors who look out for each other's needs. Yesterday in Primary we sang, *"I think the world is glorious and lovely as can be! The birds and bees and blossoms bring sweet messages to me. I sing*

and sing and sing and sing a song of joy and love. I sing and sing and sing and sing my thanks to God above." I say Amen to that. One of the nice things about growing older is that you learn to enjoy the journey as well as the destination.

[Dad] Airplanes don't fly; people make airplanes fly. Ships don't sail; people make ships sail. It is people, not weapons or machines that count the most in battle. When it comes to people, what matters



most is character because when the bugle sounds, all the competence in the world won't matter if there are not people of character

who will answer the call. (from a talk by General Norman Schwarzkopf) I am grateful to be associated with so many people of character that help to make things happen and answer the call when the bugle sounds. Each of you is at the top of the list.

As your mother mentioned I am in the midst of preparations for the Tiger Ear booth at the Fair. Last week I took Tim with me to Twin Falls to the sugar factory to pick up a ton of sugar that was donated. It was good luck for us that they were out of 100# bags and gave us 50# bags instead. Tim was good help unloading them in the Blackfoot Scout Office. I just hope that each District is filling their signup sheets with workers. It is quite a process to pull together over 500 volunteers to man the booth for eight days.

Another major effort last week was the stake Relief Society Share Fair. Sue and I put on a seminar regarding finances and how to make it through tough times. It was

very well received and I felt like the handout we had for them had some excellent information. We are sending copies to each of you. There are a couple pages dealing with figuring your net worth and working out your cash flow for the purpose of budgeting. If you need any help, let us know. The most relevant for you will be the pages dealing with money saving ideas and techniques and then the statements about your family's involvement in the process of making it through tough times. It really helped us crystallize some of our thinking and what we have learned through our experiences over the years.

The stake also sponsored a youth conference last week with a program and dance on Friday night, workshops on Saturday afternoon, and then a dinner and testimony meeting on Saturday night. I was called at the last minute to help serve root beer floats at the dance. It was fun to see so many kids that I knew and to have reaffirmed to me the goodness of the kids



around here. The EFY people that conducted the conference were excellent and had a good blend of humor and spirituality. One of them, Joel Stewart, knows Becky and John and his parents went to the Y with us.

August 20, 1995

[Mom] I just received a phone call from Grandma Richards; Trish had a little boy today. Nate and Maureen were leaving this afternoon for Provo where Nate was scheduled to help Chad for a week with some work. Maureen is hoping that Marlayne will have her baby soon and they can do it all in one big trip. They probably will not be able to return for the reunion Sept. 2 but Nate said they would try to stop by here on Saturday the 25th to join us for dinner and stay for the Homecoming on the 27th. I've gone over the events of the next two weeks so many times mentally that I feel like I have lived them already. I am probably going to go into a deep depression when all the excitement dies down and life gets back to normal.

John is due to arrive at seven on Tuesday evening in Idaho Falls. Dave and Andrea will fly into Salt Lake on Wednesday at 5:00. Maren called and she is scheduled to arrive on Thursday and Steve and Bonnie and Becky get here Saturday. We have invited John's high school friends, the neighborhood, the Larsen's, the Richards, and whomever else we could think of to join us for a Saturday evening Dutch oven cook-out. We're hoping the weather permits an outdoor party, but come rain or shine, we are going to celebrate. It's times



like this that I hate having some of you so far away.

We look forward to the time when the distances will not be so great!

I spent three days last week school shopping. With work schedules so irregular, I decided to take each boy separately even though it probably took more time than if we had all gone together. SaraKay soon caught on that she was going to need to go shopping, too, and I ended up taking her to Walmart to get a few things.

Stephani called and they returned home safe and sound the 17th. If I remember correctly, Linds, Randy, Shauntel, David, and Katie all start school tomorrow. Then on the 6th or 7th, Steve, Becky, John, Mike, Paul, Tim and SaraKay. Jonie starts her training in Minneapolis on September 11th. It's a pretty awesome thought to envision that many of our family involved in school this year. It's also an awesome thought to recognize the many blessings we have received; the health, strength, and safety that has enabled each of us to continue with our plans. Mom



[Dad] There were several events last week that deserve recounting. First of all, Tuesday night's softball game between the Men's team and the Young Men. I think the young men thought they would do better against the men than they did. Even with me as umpire and trying to favor the YM, they lost quite resoundingly. But it was hard for them to compete with Troy Goodwin, Bruce Ellis, and Bob Jenks knocking home runs over the fence. It was great to see the fellowship and fun. I think

the young men felt the recognition of the older men as equals and overall really enjoyed the game. The worst thing that happened was a high fly ball to center field that hit Paul right in the face, cutting his nose and eyebrows and giving him a huge goose egg. He is getting over it but sure didn't want to be seen in public for a few days.

The next thing I wanted to mention was the High Priests party on Friday night. We sat around and visited while we ate and had a good time. As we went

home, I commented to Sue what an enjoyable group of people we were with and how much love and acceptance I felt in that group. It is a wonderful to be able to get together with a group of peers like that and not feel any competition or threat; to feel acceptance, love, and mutual respect.

I have been reading BYU devotional and fireside speeches lately. A quote from Elder Richard C. Scott is the thought I would like to share with you this week. "Trust (the

Lord], even when in eternal perspective it temporarily hurts very much. Have patience when you are asked to wait when you want immediate action. The path you are to walk through life may be very different from others. You may not always know why He does what He does, but you can know that He is perfectly just and perfectly merciful."



That was quoted by Janet Lee when she told the story about taking her daughter to kindergarten. She was asked by the teacher to take her favorite color crayon from a box and write her name. She just stood there, until finally the teacher took her into the room with the other kids and let her play games with them. Janet asked her on the way home why she wouldn't write her name for the teacher and she said she couldn't because, "The teacher said to choose my favorite color, and there wasn't a pink crayon in the box!" Janet then commented, "How many times are we, as Heavenly Father's children, immobilized because the choice we had in mind for ourselves just isn't available to us, at least not at the time we want it?"

Someone wrote this to Janet in a letter after hearing the story, "I don't have all the colors of crayons that I want—but I do have all the colors that I need. When I need new or different colors in my life, Heavenly Father will make sure that I have them. I know that he will never give me a challenge beyond my reach or beyond the tools he

blessings, and I will be stronger for having gone through them."

What a beautiful message! I know that Heavenly Father lives and loves each and every one of us individually, as well as collectively. I also know that He hears and answers our prayers from His perspective in our eternal best interests. I love each of you and pray daily for your peace and success in your righteous endeavors. Love, DAD

August 28, 1995

[Dad] How can you pack into a few words the immensity of the last few days, the intensity and depth of feelings, and the joy and rejoicing in righteous posterity? Let me start with picking up John at the airport on Tuesday night. We hadn't been able to think about much else for the first part of this week. (It was interesting to see Air Force 1 at the IF Airport—the president was vacationing in Jackson and was flying out on Wednesday morning to take part in the funerals.)



has given me to work with. I also know that the challenges I have are in reality

There weren't very many on the flight John came in on. Dad and Alva Lu were able to join us. It is such an emotional experience to welcome a missionary home after being gone so long. John seemed just like John and we visited nonstop for hours. When we got home some of the Priests had put up a "Welcome Home, John" banner and a bunch of chalk graffiti on the driveway. Wednesday we drove to Salt Lake to pick up Dave, Andrea, and girls. I had a misunderstanding regarding the time of their flight so we were there at 5:00 for their flight that didn't come in until 7:15. But we were so delighted to have them come and be with the family for a few days



and enjoy Angela and Laurel. Maren Gentry was able to make connections to come from Logan Thursday night. Becky arrived Friday night. And Steve drove in on Saturday. I didn't realize how much the twins needed each other. It was so fun to watch Steve with Laurel Ann—she just had a thing for him and wouldn't leave him alone. It would have been more complete if Bonnie and Rachel could have been here, too. Andrea's parents and sister, Heather, arrived Saturday evening and were able to share last night and today with us. They particularly came because of blessing Angela today in Sacrament meeting. They are wonderful kindred spirits. Bonnie's Dad and two brothers came to support us this morning and we appreciated having them here. Last night after we had eaten, John's quartet got together to "jam" and they sounded

wonderful even though they have been apart for almost 2 ½ years. The kids had a fun volleyball game and all the food turned out great. It was a lot of work but it was worth it. Gary & Linda, Rick & Terri, and Kathy & Jim were able to be to sacrament meeting today. We really appreciated such good support from my family.

One really scary thing happened that tied us in knots this morning. As we were kneeling in family prayer about 10:15 John passed out and fell over. He still is feeling kind of sick and woozy tonight. We administered to him and we made it through our meetings without any problems. He visited with Jenny Taylor on the phone and she said to me that he speaks the language beautifully. It was



great to have so many of the family sing today, it really turned out well. We

appreciated the help of Maren and Heather (Andrea's sister) to help with the Soprano since we didn't have Bonnie. President Bowman said he wished he could have videotaped our meeting and showed it to all the wards as an example of what a welcome home should be like. We were reminded again how much we miss the Moons, Carlsons, Ellis's, and Rugers as they joined us today. We borrowed tables and chairs from the scout office and last night after everything was over, we loaded them up and five of us crammed into the Toyota to take them back.

September 3, 1995

[Mom] These past weeks have been both rewarding and overwhelming. Several weeks ago as I began planning for John's homecoming, I knew that it would be an exciting time for us, but I also knew how stressful the events would be because they would all be crowded into two weeks. I tried to anticipate everything that I needed to do in order to be prepared and the kids and Daddy and I worked to have the house and yard ready and the school shopping completed.

Two weeks ago tonight as we scheduled the upcoming events, I felt like the long awaited day had finally arrived and I wanted to say, "Let the fun begin!" As Daddy indicated in last week's letter, John's arrival from

Taiwan was thrilling. We were surprised and pleased to have Grandpa and Grandma Larsen join us at the airport to welcome him home. Originally they had planned to be in Washington with some of AlvaLu's children but their plans changed and they were able to be with us. John looked taller and skinnier than I remembered him being, but he assured us that he was happy and well fed. On the way home from the airport, we got to visiting about how long he had been en route. We figured he left Taiwan Tuesday morning and arrived about 33 hours later in Idaho on Tuesday evening. Someone made the comment that John had had two Tuesdays in his week. All at once, Daddy's famous comment, "The second Tuesday of next week" came to our minds and we had a good laugh. Some of you will remember that whenever you wanted something and asked Daddy when we could buy it, he would say, "The second Tuesday of next week." He always thought that he was safe in making that promise. Mike summed it up pretty well when he said, "Okay, Dad, it's the second Tuesday; pay up. How about



that hot tub and patio you promised!”

Wednesday John went with us to get David and Andrea in Salt Lake. The long trip gave us further opportunity to visit and catch up. When we discovered that we were two hours early for their flight, we ate the lunch I packed and visited some more. It was such a thrill to see David and Andrea with Laurel and Angela as they came through the unloading tunnel. Laurel had on a hat with a big flower in the front and she was toddling along at their side while David and Andrea carried baby, diaper bag, and sundry other supplies.



Sunday morning we were scurrying around finalizing our preparations for the meeting and getting Becky and David and Andrea

The rest of the week was hectic but so rewarding. My favorite moments were late at night as we practiced our musical number for the program Sunday. I would sit by Andrea on the piano bench as we sang and I could see the reflection of everyone in the bay window. Saturday we spent most of the day preparing for the evening's festivities. We invited the neighbors, John's quartet, Bishop and Brenda, and the extended family. Grandpa and Grandma Larsen, Gary, Linda, Ashley, Mindy, Roger, and Brooklyn all were able to be with us. Following the meal, we played volleyball and then moved inside to listen to John's quartet perform. Andrea's parents joined us for Saturday afternoon and evening and we invited Andrea's sister, Heather, and Maren to join our group for our Sunday performance.

packed and ready for a quick get-away following sacrament meeting. We were supposed to meet Andrea's parents at the church at 10:30 for some pictures since Angela was being blessed so we knelt for family prayer just before leaving. John had been up early that morning preparing his talk and he had stretched out in the recliner in the dining room and fallen fast asleep. I awoke him and told him to come



for family prayer. He was kneeling at the end of the couch nearest the kitchen. As Daddy began praying, I opened my eyes just in time to see John topple over onto the floor by the railing. I quickly jumped up and got to him as the rest of the family responded to the noise of his fall. He lay lifeless on the carpet, his feet tucked under the stair railing. His eyes were closed and he was moaning. His face was ashen grey. He was probably only unconscious for a few seconds but it scared me to death. Daddy ran to the kitchen to get a pan because when John came to he had the dry heaves. We got him into the bedroom and Daddy, Steve, David, and Mike administered to him. We decided to give him every opportunity to rest before the 11:00 meeting so the rest of the family left and Becky and I stayed home to bring John over a little later. Laurel had been fussing earlier in the morning and David and Andrea were trying to get packed so Steve had taken her into the living room and been reading to her to keep her occupied. She fell fast asleep in his arms and was carefully transferred to the bedroom about 10:00. We brought John

and Laurel to the church just in time for the meeting. I felt like I was going to come unglued. I knew that John was assisting with the blessing of the baby, singing with the family, and also performing with a men's group, plus giving his report and I envisioned him toppling over at any minute. Before we left home, Becky and I knelt together and asked the Lord to help us get through the meeting without incident. I wanted it to be a happy occasion and didn't want to lose control of my emotions. I really felt like the Lord heard our prayers and we were able to accomplish our desires.

David blessed Angela with the assistance of Daddy, Grandpa Cottam, Steve, John, Mike, Grandpa Larsen, Uncle Gary, Randy Cox, Bob Jenks, and the Bishopric. It was very touching. Angela was dressed in a beautiful flowing white dress and David looked so handsome as he performed the ordinance.

John's report was from the heart and very sweet. Later, both Jenny and Ray Taylor, who know Chinese, commented to us that



John's Chinese is very good and Jenny said that he is so concise that it is almost impossible to hear his accent.

Following the meeting, we hurried home to send Becky and David and Andrea on their way to catch their flight. Everybody was rushing around, loading the car, and grabbing a bite to eat. There were lots of hugs and some tears shed as we said our good-byes. One picture that remains with me was of Steve and Dave embracing.

In the days following, as I made my trip to St. George, I found myself thinking about the week and the joy of being together. Although it had been hectic, it had been so fun and rewarding. Sister Godfrey commented that she missed the family members that weren't there with us and I



had to agree that although we looked like a big bunch, there was an empty spot for those of you who are away. Sunday afternoon John got a much needed chance to rest and he slept until about 9 that night. When he got up he was sick again and so we had him sleep in the guest room where we could be close.

Monday morning dawned with all the scheduled tasks of getting John outfitted for school and bags packed. Since John needed to report to the high council on Wednesday, he couldn't go to Provo with me on Tuesday so I took Mike to Provo on Tuesday, spent the night with Steve and Bonnie, and left early the next morning for St. George. One bonus of being in Provo was that I got to meet Becky's boyfriend, Chris. He was very sweet and friendly and we had a late night visit before he and Becky left.

Mike moved into Heritage at about 10 Wednesday morning with the help of Steve and Becky and got settled. John finished his packing and Daddy and Tim took him to Provo on Thursday so that





he could begin job hunting and getting ready for school. Since he couldn't move in until the 1st, Steve and Bonnie again graciously acted as hosts and John spent the night with them. Tonight I called John and Mike and they both said that they have some wonderful roommates and are feeling a little more at home. I especially appreciate Bonnie and Steve for again welcoming one and all to their apartment and for the time they spent helping Mike and John. I also appreciated the time Becky took with them. I continued on to St. George and arrived about one. SaraKay slept most of the way and it gave me some quiet time to reflect on the previous week's events.

I thought back to the day that Stephani and I went to the Idaho Falls Temple to do the initiatory work for family names that Grandma Richards had submitted. It was inspiring to listen to the beautiful blessings promised in the initiatory ceremony. I remembered as a young mother feeling the strain of the child-bearing years and the tasks of caring for my family, and calling on the Lord to make those temple promises efficacious in my life. I felt then, as I have

felt this past two weeks, that those blessings have been realized in my life and that I was given the strength necessary to meet my tasks.

When I arrived in St. George, I found Grandpa and Grandma well and happy. They had systematically been packing up everything they owned and then moving the boxes to the garage. They amazed me at how

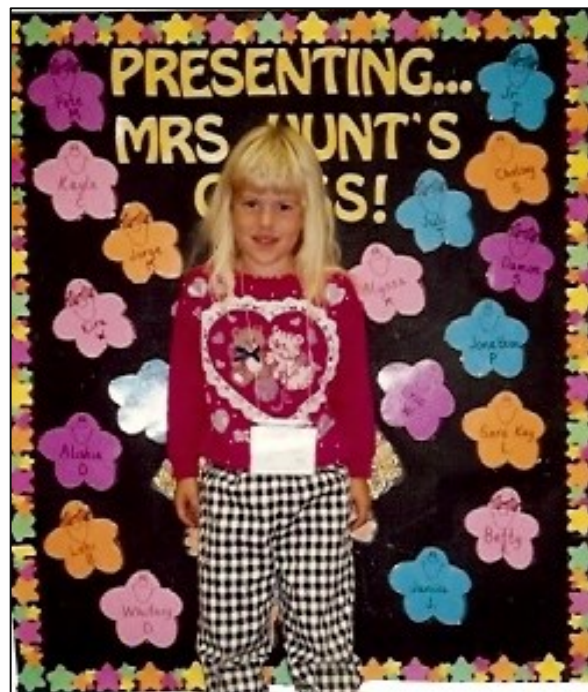
much they had gotten done and how close they were to being ready to move. I joined them in the effort and we packed and cleaned for the next three days. They had carefully outlined each day's activities. When I commented on how organized they were Grandma said that it was their 50th move in 52 years of marriage! Wow. Real pros!

Grandpa Richards worked and rested and then worked some more. I knew that the most important time for him would be Saturday morning when the ward crew was coming to load the moving van and I tried to encourage him to get the rest he needed so that he would be well for Saturday. Grandma Richards worked at my side as we packed up the kitchen, the computer, emptied the fridges, and took down wall hangings. I was amazed at their stamina and good spirits despite the daily strain they were under. By Friday night we were totally packed and mostly cleaned except for mopping and Vacuuming. We went to bed early, set the alarm for 5:30, arose and packed our cars, ate breakfast, and prepared for the van. It arrived at 7:00 and

the ward members at 8:00. But not just the ward arrived. Neighbors arrived and joined in the effort. There were between 20 and 30 people working together, carrying boxes, loading furniture, vacuuming, mopping, serving sandwiches, and lending a hand. Several went out of their way to express to me their feelings of affection for Grandpa and Grandma, for the goodness of their lives, for their sweet acts of kindness and love, and for the example they had been to them over the last eight years. It was very heartwarming. By 9:30 the entire van was loaded and people were sitting around visiting and saying their good-byes. Tears were shed. Thanks were given. I felt fortunate to be a part of it and to feel the outpouring of love and appreciation from their neighbors and friends. I left St. George about 10:30, feeling gratitude for the opportunity to help Grandpa and Grandma make this transition in their lives. They are at Aunt Kathy's tonight and tomorrow. Aunt Maureen will drive them to Richland where they will stay with Maureen and Nate until their new home is completed. They have purchased a lot in Lisa's ward and Nate will be building their home for them. Hopefully they will be settled in their new home about October 1st. Our prayers go with them.

Enroute home I stopped at Steve and Bonnie's and visited with them. They took me into the bedroom to see Rachel who was napping. She was curled up with a stuffed animal and looked so cute and peaceful. They are proud parents and anxiously awaiting Bonnie's due date. Since her last delivery was early, Bonnie is being especially careful to do all she can to carry this baby full term.

I arrived home about 8:00 and was surprised to find Daddy and Tim home since I knew that Saturday was Dad's first





September 11, 1995

[Mom] Today was SaraKay's first official day at kindergarten. The boys started school last Thursday but the kindergarteners' (the word is bigger than the kids) had an appointment for screening on Thursday but didn't start until today. When I went for the screening I was able to see the new school addition. It is truly impressive! Sara Kay's teacher made her feel right at home. As I took her hand and we walked around looking at all the exciting things in the room, I got a little choked up just thinking about how fortunate she is to have such a wonderful opportunity for schooling. I found myself thinking back about the rest of you kids and your entry into the public school system. I know that there are some things amiss with our schools these days, but for the most part, my experience with children and schools has been a positive one and I

am indebted to many sweet teachers for their influence and devotion.

big fair day. He looked tired and smelled like Tiger Ears. He and Tim unloaded the van for me and helped me put away my week's accumulation of odd's and ends from St. George. It felt good to be home, safe and sound and satisfied with the week. This morning Daddy went back in to the fair for a few hours and then joined us at church. Just before going to sacrament meeting, I was gathering things together and I yelled down the stairs, "Come up for prayer." Paul poked his head around the corner and said, "I'm the only one down here, Mom." As the four of us knelt for prayer, the reality of it all hit me. In testimony meeting, Brother Watson expressed his sentiments about sending off his firstborn to college. I noticed Bob and Janet Jenks were shedding a tear or two. I decided not to tell them what I knew: it doesn't get any easier as time goes by.

Daddy is finishing up fair details today. He always breathes a sigh of relief when it's over for another year. It seemed like he was plagued this year with volunteers that failed to show for their shift or came late and left early. It is such an involved process that he needs a full crew to make it run right. Tim spent several shifts helping and Paul and I even got drafted and spent time filling in. Friday afternoon Daddy made a rushed trip to Salt Lake to borrow some mixers while the ones he was using were being repaired. Shutting down for even a few hours during the busy times can mean a difference of several thousand dollars and so the pressure is really on for the full week.

Tim and Paul seem happy with school. Paul is taking piano from Linnea and Tim and Sara Kay from Lona Mae. We are trying to



construction on their home is due to start this week.

When I called Mike last night he said that they had just had the "Cousins" monthly home evening at Steve and Bonnie's and that everyone had been there including Julie Ann Gentry.

get back into the routine of early morning practicing. Tim went to the stake center this morning at six to play ball and try to get back in shape for basketball season. Snake River's football team is rated No. 1 and they continue to beat every one they play. Wish BYU was doing as well. I was cleaning the van and garage last Saturday as we listened to the game. Melanie Hanni came over with some fresh tomatoes and cucumbers from her garden and commented on what a loyal fan I was. I told her it is just one way I keep in touch with my college kids. I know that "Somewhere, Out There" some of the rest of you are sharing that experience with me and it makes me happy to think about it.

We visited Grandpa and Grandma Larsen last night. Grandpa had been in for some tests last week and was diagnosed with diabetes. Although it is not serious enough that he will need injections, he will have to be careful about his diet and aware of what he can and can't eat. It is a joy to see how happy he and Alva Lu are and to know how much they love and care for each other. My folks are settled in at Nate's and

Even though she isn't a Richards' cousin, she is a Larsen cousin; they all seemed to have a great time! It was the first time that some of them had seen John since his mission. Becky invited Chris to attend and he fit right in with the group. Thanks to Steve and Bonnie for hosting the event. Steve suggested everyone try to write a family letter once a month. Sounds like a wonderful idea to me. Do what you can. I know how busy life gets. Mom

[Dad] Last week was a very demanding and strenuous week for me and I am glad it is over for another year. The Tiger Ear booth is always a pressure cooker because there are so many things that can go wrong and affect the bottom line for the week. We were fortunate in being able to do about \$6400 more than we did last year. But, we actually sold about 600 less Tiger Ears. I got the sugar donated by Amalgamated (White Satin) this year and part of the powdered milk donated by Darigold in Twin Falls. We knocked out the transmissions in two mixers and that's why I had to make a quick trip to SLC last Friday to take them to a place that could repair them and had a loaner for us for a couple of days. I

appreciate my family for their willingness to help when called upon—it really makes a difference to feel like you have someone else who cares and is willing to make a few sacrifices for the cause.



Apparently I haven't missed much as far as BYU football for the last couple of Saturdays. I hope that changes. As I was driving back from Salt Lake last Friday I was station hopping to find something to listen to and found the Snake River vs. Shelley game. It was fun to listen and hear several of my Priests mentioned on the radio. SR is doing well again this year and should be contenders for state champs.

It's hard to get back into things with my other work responsibilities after the last couple of weeks so intensely focused on the fair. I have a national teleconference coming up in October, Area II meetings, and a lot of other things going on. In addition, it is time for another Teton Trails to hit the presses so I guess I'd better get busy.

September 18, 1995

[Mom] Today is Sam's birthday, but by the time we called him, he was already in bed for the night. Sorry we missed him.

Tomorrow is Paul's birthday but tonight we opened his presents since tomorrow we have piano lessons at 6:00 a.m., Paul has lessons at 6:15 and Daddy has to leave by 6:45 for a meeting in Idaho Falls. I asked Paul what he wanted for his birthday dinner tomorrow night and he said he had to work from 4-7 and then has a priest activity from 7-9. I'm not sure he's going to have much of a celebration the way things are shaping up. We did have a birthday celebration today although it wasn't for Sam or Paul, but for Adam Taylor (Ray and Jenny's nine-year-old son who is staying with us for a few weeks while Jenny has extensive chemo treatments

in Salt Lake City.) This is her fourth reoccurrence and she has been struggling with leaving her five children for the 3-4 weeks it is going to take to finish up in Salt Lake. Sara Kay has thoroughly enjoyed having another brother around and he has been good to play with her and read to her at night.

Tomorrow is picture day at school and SaraKay went to bed with curlers in her hair. I am working as a volunteer helping with the process and receive a free picture packet for my time so hopefully we will have some nice pictures to send soon.

Last week was a busy one with peaches to can and corn to freeze and a music library to organize. I held two work nights and we moved all the music from Riverside and

Moreland to the stake center. We put it in color coded folders with name and number of copies on the folders. We discarded, consolidated, and in general did some good organizing and housecleaning. I met with the wards that are furnishing music for conference and set up schedules for practicing and Saturday I attended a workshop on conducting a ward choir. I really learned a lot and am anxious to try it out on my own choir. For our practice Sunday, I arranged for someone to video tape our rehearsal and we sang several numbers that we have performed recently. The video tape is for Jenny Taylor who used to be in our choir until the chemo affected her voice and she couldn't sing anymore. It was a very sweet opportunity for us to sing for her, "I Need Thee Every Hour", "Sweet Hour Of Prayer," "More Holiness Give Me", and "The Lord Bless You and Keep You".

Daddy spent Friday evening and Saturday at Island Park at a follow- up Woodbadge reunion and I planned to get in some good time with some boxes of music I was sorting through. Instead I spent part of the evening hunting for a little neighbor girl who turned up missing. She was last seen in her yard swinging and then she was gone. All the neighbors were alerted and we began scouring the ditches, canals, corrals, and anywhere else we thought she might be. The little girl's mother was gone and she was being babysat by her older sister. We walked down through fields of wheat stubble and checked behind bushes at the stake center. Finally about an hour later, the mother got home. She wondered why all the neighbors were on the road and congregated in her front

yard. Through some misunderstanding, she had taken the little girl with her instead of leaving her like she told her daughter she was going to do and she was safe and sound with her mother all the time! We were all relieved!

When Daddy got home Saturday night, worn out and tired, he expressed his frustration with feeling like he hasn't had a minute to call his own for a long time. It is hard to feel the constant pressure and demands on our energies and time. I know that each of you are experiencing those same frustrations and trying to keep your equilibrium in the midst of the challenges. Mom

[Dad] Yes, things have been busy and hectic around here. With the family shrinking here at home you would think there wouldn't be nearly as many demands on our time. But with Sue's new responsibility and all the different things I am involved in, the pace doesn't slow at all. Orchestra started up again last week and I was able to go for part of it before I had to leave to go to Roundtable. The Priests had



a joint activity with the Laurels at the river bottoms with a wiener roast and games. We were also responsible for the youth fireside Sunday night and we had Zane Clements talk about what he's experienced relative to Shan's death a year ago. It was a touching and spiritual fireside for the kids and really reinforced how much Heavenly Father cares for us and is involved in our lives. So many little things helped to prepare the family for his untimely death. Some of his spiritual messages to family members from the other side of the veil reinforced how thin the veil is and the reality of spiritual beings.

Friday morning I left at a little after 5:00 a.m. to meet a potential donor and take him to Jackson Lake Lodge to meet with our attorney, Perry Cochell, to review some ideas on how using a Charitable Remainder Trust could help him and his family in liquidating some real estate assets they have in California. It was a great experience and I really enjoyed getting better acquainted with him. The plan that Perry outlined seemed like the ticket for solving their problems. They are meeting with the CPA in Salt Lake this week to pursue the whole thing. On the way



back to Idaho Falls, he took me to see some riverfront property that will eventually go to the Boy Scouts as well. It seems like a long time since I have been able to do something like that that is so much a part of my responsibilities as development director. Love you, DAD



Saturday, September 23, 1995

[Mom] Some of you will recall that Grandpa Richards tells the story of how each Thanksgiving morning while the women in the family were cooking dinner that the boys would have the chore of moving the outhouse to a new location. It became kind of an annual ritual signifying the



and hood but since the windows were down it was like riding a motorcycle in the winter and he arrived at Linnea's hardly able to move his fingers. Consequently, today we performed the annual ritual and the windows are up. Just hope it doesn't get too hot during harvest.

coming of winter. When this unpleasant chore was completed they could go in for the annual feast. This week I told Daddy that we have a ritual that signifies the beginning of winter around here. We roll up the Toyota windows. For the last several years, the Toyota windows are either up or down. Up for the winter...down for the summer. One reason this is so is because we lost the handles that roll them up or down, but the biggest reason is that the only way to keep the glass from disappearing into the door and never being seen again is for Daddy to take the door apart and fix it up.. or down.

Monday night it froze quite hard and Tuesday morning when Paul left at 6:00 to go to piano lessons he about froze to death. He thought ahead and wore his winter coat

Tim asked if he could write a word or two about his experience in Island Park....

A TRUE LONG STORY BY TIMOTHY J. LARSEN

"No way!" I told Shane Jenks. He called to ask me if I would join the cross country team. He thought he would join and get in great shape for basketball season, but he



wanted to have a friend on the team. After about five minutes of trying to talk him out of it, I finally gave in. I went to practice the next Monday. Mr. Jackson, (the coach) welcomed us to the team. He had us jog three miles; then we were done. I thought, this is going to be easy, when I was done jogging the three miles. Mr. Jackson told us we were in great shape and tomorrow he would have us run with the team.

The following day I looked forward to practicing with the team. I assumed it would just be another simple jog; I was wrong. The team lined up to start and Mr. Jackson said go. The pace was unbelievable, it was faster than when I sprint, and we were supposed to keep it up for 4 miles! After one time around the track I thought I was going to die. I thought I better go around once more, so I went around again and I got a salty blood taste in my mouth and it felt as if my lungs and intestines were in my throat so I stopped. I drank lots and lots of water. I realized I should have never listened to Shane. I also realized Mr. Jackson had lied; I was definitely not in great shape.

After I had taken a long break I started running with the team when they came around again. After we were done running, my legs were so sore I had to walk straight legged and I couldn't bend over. Mr. Jackson told us great job and come back tomorrow for another practice. I was so tired, I didn't even know if I would live to see tomorrow, let alone come back to another practice. He also told Shane and I that there was a meet on Thursday, and we would get to run in it. That would mean that Shane

and I would have three days of practice, and our team and the six teams we were competing against would have had about a month of training. Shane and I joined the team in the middle of the season. I survived the next practice and now I had to go to the meet in Island Park. On the bus there, everyone was setting goals for themselves. "My goal is to get in the top ten," someone said. "My goal is to get under nineteen minutes," another said. "Tim, what's your goal," someone asked me. "To not get last place," I said half joking and half serious. Everyone laughed. I asked Ryan Anderson what it was like having 93 people (that's how many would be competing at this meet) start running at once. I said, answering my own question jokingly, "Everyone is shoving and pushing and falling on the ground, it's a bloody brawl."

After riding on a bus with worse shocks than the Toyota for two hours, we arrived in Island Park. There were guys twice my size. I had to run varsity so I was competing against up to seniors. I stretched out and got ready for the race. All 93 boys stepped up to the line that was only about 12 feet across. You can imagine how far back we



were and how crammed together we were. The gun went off! I realized too soon that my joke about the bloody brawl was true! Everyone was pushing and shoving, all around me people were getting shoved to the ground and getting trampled. Since it was gravel, they got scraped up and bled really bad. It was a bloody brawl! In my fright I sprinted, setting the worst possible pace for myself. I was in about the top fifteen for around five seconds, then their month of practice kicked in and my three days of practice did too, unfortunately. In the next 20 seconds, around 70 guys passed me. I read a guys shirt in front of me. It read: HOW'S MY RUNNING, CALL 1-900-EAT-DUST. I felt horrible.

When I run I have absolutely no sense of how far I have run. This race was 3 miles. You run on a path through a forest, and you can't see very far ahead of yourself because of all the turns around huge rocks and the many trees. Around one turn, the

girls on the cross country team and Mr. Jackson stood, cheering. I heard amongst all the cheers, "Sprint, you're almost there." (After the race was over I found out I wasn't even halfway through.) So I started sprinting, after about 20 yards I was almost dead so I slowed back down to my pace before I started sprinting. Then I came out of the forest and onto a road. I could see how many people were ahead of me. It was devastating. The guy in first place was probably more than a mile ahead of me and the rest were not far behind. I had run so hard for so long, I figured hardly anyone could keep up with me. I turned around expecting to see many people. I was wrong as usual. To my surprise I was second to last. He wasn't even far behind either. I would have to really work to reach my goal that I had jokingly made on the bus. I ran for one and a half more miles and then heard cheers. I thought I was going to die but I kept running. A huge crowd cheered and I





sprinted for the remaining 100 yards. I ran through the finish line and my time was 24 minutes and 18 seconds. I was so tired I couldn't talk and hardly walk. I went to hopefully see that I had mistaken when I was running, that I wouldn't be last place but actually a good place. I looked at the board. Luckily I was wrong. Unluckily I wasn't very far off. I beat two people. I went above and beyond my goal, not getting 92nd but 91st! Even though my place can't get much worse, I am very proud of my performance. I didn't stop running once

and I worked my heart out. I hope you enjoyed my story. I know it seemed like a comedy but I literally did not egsagerate.(I don't know how to spell it!) I will try to keep you updated on my next meets. Tim

[Dad] A tough act to follow, but here goes. In some ways, the last couple of weeks have seemed like a marathon or cross country race for me. My work has been very demanding—physically, and time wise. There is still a lot of pressure until we get the next issue of the “Trails” out and the Teleconference over on October 11. This last week I helped with a mailing to all Bishops and Stake Presidents in the Council regarding the LDS Relations Conference on October 18 with Elder Glen Pace. I also had a mailing to put together with all the details of the times and locations of the upcoming National Teleconference and invitations to about 600 people to attend and information to each of the 35 members of the planned giving committee to help follow up with phone calls to those invited to insure a better response rate.

Estate Planning Council meetings started again for the year this week in Idaho Falls and Pocatello. I feel that my presence there is beginning to pay off with relationships with some other significant professionals in the estate planning arena. With orchestra and stake priesthood leadership, that



about rounds out my week.

We had a great Saturday and were able to get a lot done around here. The yard looks great. The clutch is going out on the Toyota and there is a flat on the Hornet, but we have the van back after a major repair on its engine. The harvest break from school starts tomorrow, but Gary isn't starting until Wednesday. He is having his annual harvest meeting tonight at 8:00. There are quite a few from our ward working for him including Bishop Godfrey and Kory. The crew should be a good, fun, hard-working one!

Sue and I made it to the temple this week. It is always a refreshing pause in our lives to visit the temple. Sweet is the peace that seeps into my soul as I go through a temple experience. We saw several people we knew there and also enjoyed eating dinner in the cafeteria—prime rib for me and shrimp for your mother. She's at our stake's rebroadcast of the Women's Conference right now. I am grateful for your mother and all she does to help me with my tasks as well as helping me be the best me. She certainly proves the statement, "Your best friend is he or she who helps you bring out of yourself the best that is in you."

[Mom] I just returned from the women's conference. What a sweet message of encouragement and hope! I've had a great Sunday, complete with Tim bearing a beautiful testimony in sacrament meeting. Janet Jenks caught up to me after the meeting and asked me if I had forced Tim to do it. I had to admit that it had surprised me as much as her. She commented about how grateful they are for the relationship Tim and Shane are developing and I agreed. Good friends are so important and we have been blessed to have a host of good friends over the years.

I wanted to mention our experience with Adam Taylor. I volunteered quite a while ago to help in any way I could and so when Jenny asked me about taking him for a few weeks during her extensive treatments in Salt Lake, I consented. I have never enjoyed tending children and I was a little worried about it but I felt the need and was committed to help. To make a long story short, it has been a very sweet experience. Adam is a fine young man and obedient and helpful. I have had the time to spend with him one-on-one and to tuck him in at night and help him with his school and piano. We have set him up in the red room downstairs, complete with stuffed animals, and he seems to enjoy being a part of the family. I have really felt that Jenny's prayers for his well-being are being answered in my behalf because I have felt love for him and not begrudged his presence. It has been a lesson to me. The Lord will comfort and bless us and our families when trials come and things aren't ideal.



Sara Kay told me the other day that she hoped Adam's mother would never get well because then he could live with us forever. I had to correct her and tell her not to say that but, it was indicative of her feelings about having one more brother. I received pictures of the airport homecoming and the Sunday homecoming and festivities from David and Andrea and it brought back a flood of sweet memories. We have had some wonderful times in the last few months and I am grateful for the Lord's many blessings to us!

When Dad and I arrived at the temple early on Friday, I decided to put some names on the prayer roll before the session. When I finally got into the chapel where we wait for the session, Daddy asked me where I had been. I told him that I started putting some names on the roll and before I was through, I had included everyone in the family. I couldn't help thinking of each of you, your challenges and concerns, and feeling the need for Divine help in your



lives.

October 2, 1995

[Mom] The boys left early today to go to the farm and get back into harvest for another week. Sometimes it doesn't really seem like spud harvest compared to when we had five or six of you working and it was a major ordeal to get through the two weeks. This year it has not really been too hectic except that the days seem so long. Daddy has been working long hours on the council newspaper so that has added to the loneliness around here, too. About every three months he puts together the council newspaper and then bundles it up into zip code piles and takes it to the post office for a bulk mailing.

We had planned to attend a Carmack mission reunion last Friday evening in Salt Lake but as things turned out, we spent all of Friday getting the paper finished, printed, addressed, and bundled up for mailing. Friday morning Daddy called and asked if I could line up some volunteers to help address and sort. I got on the phone and called neighborhood children and lined up several. At 3:30 I started picking up kids and by 4:00 we had 16 young volunteers from our ward and several from a Thomas ward in at the scout office. It was noisy and chaotic but in about two hours they addressed 6,000 newspapers. Once the bulk of the work was done everyone started playing around and even though we weren't entirely finished, I told Daddy that I thought it was time to deliver the neighborhood home. After that I went back in (with Sara Kay and Adam) and we surveyed the piles and mess and decided to go home, eat supper, and then go back in at 7:00 to sort and finish up.

Snake River was playing Blackfoot in football and so we listened to the game while we finished up. (We won by a touchdown). It took us until about 10:30.

Needless to say, we missed our reunion, but we were relieved to finish it for another three months. Part of the stress of the newspaper is that we never have a scheduled time to go to press or to line up volunteers because of all the unknowns of collecting the articles and information. Each time we do it, I think, "There's got to be a better way than this," but it never seems to be any less stressful.

Part of last week I spent washing windows. I also spent several hours at the music library continuing my organizing of the stake's music. It has been a much bigger project than I ever envisioned but also very satisfying to be able to very quickly access the music, the number of copies and topic. This project has reminded me of hiking....you think you are about to the peak and when you go the distance you discover that there is still another higher peak to climb. The more I organize, the more I see that can be done to perfect the system, so I just keep working to make it right.

As for the windows, Grandma Richards used to say that clean windows give you a happy outlook on life and I have found that advice true. I also have found that as I clean my home I feel a renewed appreciation for it and the satisfaction it brings to us.

We invited the missionaries to come to dinner yesterday. Late Saturday night I received a call

from them saying that they wondered if they could come at five instead of noon.



They were going to attend conference with the Spanish Branch and have dinner with the branch between conference sessions. I thought that was a pretty good excuse for changing our dinner plans and agreed to host them at five. When they arrived, I had to get my photo album out and show them the pictures of our time with the Mexicans



years ago. It was interesting how many of the people that we mentioned, they knew because they are still active in the Spanish branch and in the wards in Rockland and American Falls. It was a pleasant experience to visit over dinner with them.

Daddy and I were able to listen to all the sessions of conference. I felt like many of the talks were given to comfort as well as to instruct. I think it was Elder Monson who talked about patience in trials and related the history of the church in Germany following the Second World War. He made some promises to the congregations regarding them someday receiving all the blessings of the gospel and about 30 years later all those promises came true. He encouraged us to have patience in afflictions and trust in the Lord.

October 9, 1995

[Mom] The kids are still in harvest but hopefully they will be through by tomorrow night and ready to get back into school. The district extended harvest until Wednesday due to the large numbers of farmers that weren't finished, so at least Paul and Tim haven't had to miss school.

Last night the Chamber Singers had a meeting and practice at Godfrey's and finalized plans for the upcoming Homecoming Dance this Saturday. The high school kids will miss part of their Homecoming events due to the extension, but I'm sure that they will still enjoy some nice events before the week is over. After the practice last night Paul's friends, Merritt, Brett, and Micah came over to visit.



They were all sitting on the floor in the living room talking and they all looked so tired. I told them that they looked like they had had it and needed to go home and to bed. They agreed and admitted that they were ready for school to resume. They are a good bunch of kids and we enjoy having them around.

On the front page of the Sunday Sports section of the Post Register was a picture of Ryan in the tractor cab working in harvest. It told about Snake River's football team taking time out for harvest and about how they work long hours in the spud fields and then practice late at night to stay in shape for their games. It was complimentary and well written. One of the comments the reporter made was that the kids at Snake River know that the harvest is important and that they and their coach work cooperatively with the parents and farmers to meet the demands of the season. I couldn't help thinking what a blessing it has been to our family to live in an area where the work ethic is valued and where young people assume the financial responsibility for many of their own needs. Anyway, it was a sweet article and also gave the team and Ryan some good

publicity. Snake River is rated #1 in the state right now and it has been exciting to see! Wish our basketball program was as strong as our wrestling and football.

Daddy's last big push of the month will be over this Wednesday and he can relax a little. He is even going to take a few days off and help me finish up the yard and garden before winter sets in. He has a training seminar in Logan this weekend and I might tag along. I have some preparations to make for some talks and presentations I'm giving later this month and it would give me some quiet time to think and get ready.

John will be home Saturday to attend a baptism in Shelley of a fellow he met in Taiwan and worked with. Just so happens that this fellow's father was a counselor to Grandpa Richards years ago in the stake MIA! Small world. We will be excited to see John and reaffirm that he is home. The other morning at family prayer, SaraKay prayed that John would be safe on his mission and I realized that she hasn't quite got straight what is going on around here. Sometimes I'm not sure that I do either, but I'm pretty sure that John is home from Taiwan and at BYU for now.

When I called John and Mike Sunday evening, I could hear lots of female voices and laughter in the background and I told Paul and Tim about it later and they both lamented, "They're down there having a ball and we're here working our tails off!" True! I should have told them what my mother always told me, "Every dog has his day!" I'm not sure exactly what that means but it was something she always said.

I spent much of last week continuing with my library project and Sunday was our first big choir practice with the conference choir.

We introduced our Christmas numbers at practice and I got more music ordered to use for our Sunday program. I want to get everything outlined and started so all these upcoming performances are ready and the experience isn't so harried. As I have sorted through the volumes of new and old music in these three building libraries I have been amazed at what I'm finding. There is music over 60 years old in the Riverside library and theme songs for Primary classes that are no longer in existence. I am not discarding these obsolete numbers but am finding a way to file and access them for future historical use. The rest of the music is a conglomeration of beautiful classics, secular and sacred numbers, and a lot of one and two copies of music that no one will probably ever want to sing again. I haven't discarded much except the hundreds of Xeroxed copies of music that have been filed over the years. People have really abused the copyright laws. It has been nice to see what music is available and get it into an organized system. Daddy has been patient with me and helped me with computer lists and alphabetizing. November first is our annual auxiliary training meeting and I want to have everything ready to go and



show that night.

October 16, 1995

[Mom] It's quiet this morning. Feels good. The weekend was so harried that I'm still wondering if there is anything that we forgot to do. Last Friday Daddy and I were invited to attend a special seminar for Scouting in Logan as well as a night out for dinner and entertainment. Daddy took Friday off to take care of some winterizing around the place and got so involved that we left a little late. Part way to Logan we realized that we were behind Arvid and Mary Jensen who were also invited to the events and we felt relieved to think that they were late also. Our one concern was that they seemed to be dressed for the occasion and we were still in casual attire and needed to go to the motel to change. We were following them so closely (two lane highway) that I could see that Mary had on pearl earrings and I commented to Daddy that they were already for the dinner. We followed them thinking they could show us the way and we would save time finding the restaurant and theatre. We realized that we made a mistake when they turned into the ZCMI parking lot!

Later at the dinner we were laughing about it and Mary commented that she didn't know they were being followed. She said they started for Logan, realized after reading the invitation that it started at 6:30 instead of 7:00, and decided to dress in the car so she had been putting on her skirt and panty hose en route! Part way there Arvid realized he had forgotten a white shirt and they had to go to ZCMI to do some shopping. Keep in mind that these are the leaders of an organization whose motto is "Be Prepared". We attended a musical in a beautiful restored theatre. The production was "Will Rogers" and told in dance and song his life and accomplishments. It was in the style of the Zigfield Follies of the 20's and very

entertaining. I kept thinking how much our parents would enjoy it because it was reminiscent of their times.

Saturday morning Steve attended his meetings and I stayed in the motel room and prepared some speaking presentations. Having four hours of uninterrupted study time was almost more than my brain could handle and I was ready for the break when Daddy picked me up at noon. John and an old companion were due home to attend a baptism in Shelley so we were hoping to see them when we got home about two. When we arrived, Tim informed us that John had just called and said they were just leaving Provo and would be late. I called the family involved in the baptism and informed them. By the time we finally got through for the night with baptisms, receptions and getting Paul off to the Homecoming Dance, it was after nine but we settled in to visit and listen to the BYU/ASU game.

John looked much healthier than when we last saw him and seemed content with college life. His old mission companion, Whitney Clayton, was a sweet young man and we thoroughly enjoyed having him share the weekend with us. We were all waiting for Paul to get home from the Homecoming Dance but when midnight came and Paul didn't, Dad and I gave up and hit the sack. Paul said later that as he drove by earlier that evening with his car full of friends, he noticed the lights on and longed to be home with us visiting. He enjoyed his date though and looked so handsome in his newly purchased navy blue sports coat!

I had planned a delicious "we're delighted you're home" meal for Sunday and just before leaving for our meetings I checked the pot roast, added potatoes, and regulated the oven temperature. Part way through sacrament meeting I found myself hoping that 300 wasn't too high for the meat, but felt guilty for having such worldly

thoughts in a sacred meeting, I abandoned the worry. Returning home at 2:00 I noticed that I couldn't smell the roast and I knew I was in trouble. There on the top of the stove was the roaster, cold and waiting to be returned to the oven. I about lost my cool. The only thing I could think of doing was substituting hamburgers for roast. When I went out to get the hamburger in the freezer, I noticed some T-bone steak that my neighbor gave us several weeks ago when they butchered another cow and were emptying out their freezer. I quickly put the steaks in the microwave, re-peeled the black potatoes, and tried to stay calm.

Daddy returned from church, assessed the situation, and began helping with the crisis. He knows me well enough to sense my moods and he stayed at my side helping get things done until dinner was served. When you get as old as we are, you can usually sense what your spouse is feeling and you can meet their unspoken needs in a sweet and intimate way.

Part way through this marathon Kent Fife came to check John's computer, Muffy Hammond brought a box for John to take to Provo for David, Andy Davis came to borrow a scout shirt, and the phone rang four times.

Right after we finished dinner Daddy left for a Board of Review and we began pulling things together for John to take back to Provo. When I thought we were nearly ready, the home teachers walked in the back door and said that they hoped we remembered that they were coming. While we listened to them, John and Whitney loaded potatoes, winter coats, and other sundry items and prepared to leave. We said

hasty good-byes (to home teachers and John) and I left for choir.

Following our short ward practice, we combined in the chapel for an 80 voice practice for stake conference. What a thrill! I think everyone there felt the way I did because we could hardly get them to go home when the rehearsal was over. Dad, Paul and Tim then attended a youth fireside and I read some stories to SaraKay and settled her for the night.

This morning I have been mentally rehearsing our weekend and I have had time to think through each special event and enjoy it again. Life is good!

We find ourselves drawn out in prayer daily. First, we asked that you remember Grandpa and Grandma Richards as they go through this time of transition waiting for their home to be completed. Grandma said





Nate and Maureen have been so good to them, going out of their way to meet their needs and make them welcome in their home but it is always a challenge to combine families and I know they would appreciate your prayers in their behalf. Second is the upcoming arrival of Bonnie and Steve's new baby. This is the week he (or she) is scheduled to arrive and it is always a scary and traumatic time. Steve is interviewing with several companies and sorting out what would best suit their desires and needs. Another concern is the situation Jonie is in attending school in Minneapolis while Jeff and the girls stay behind in Cass Lake and carry on without a mother and wife. Jonie said that it has been difficult to be so far from family; she could use our faith and prayers.

Another concern is that of the procedures that Shauntel and Randy are undergoing. They are utilizing the latest technology and finest doctors available and they need our continuing faith and prayers. Aside from these concerns, we know that each of you

have day-to-day challenges that tax your strength and resources. Know we love you and pray for you and trust in the Lord to answer each plea with wisdom and love.

Let me share a cute story about SaraKay. A new family moved into the housing development and we had invited their five-year-old to come play for a few hours. A few days later she invited SaraKay to come play with her. I drove her over to the house and waited while SaraKay got out and walked up the sidewalk to the front door. Before she got half way, the front door opened and her little friend came bursting through the door, ran down the sidewalk, put her arms around SaraKay and began jumping up and down with joy. Sara Kay was so surprised she didn't quite know what to do but carried on until the little girl put her down and invited her in.

It was so funny! I thought later how uninhibited children are and how much we can learn from them. There are several people in my life that I feel thrilled to see each Sunday and yet I sometimes fail to express my love or joy at being in their presence. We need to be more expressive and loving, putting our pride and fears aside, and admit, "You are so special! You make my day!"

October 23, 1995

[Mom] Congratulations to Bonnie and Steve! Baby Nathan was born today and weighed in at 7'15" and both Mom and baby are doing well!

I have been on the phone today scheduling practices for upcoming choir practices, sextet practices, conference practices, and a musical number for Know Your Religion this Friday. I'm feeling overwhelmed with my ward and stake music jobs right now.

Yesterday was our first day as a four-ward meetinghouse. Our three hour block was cut to two and a half hours. It was fun to

see our Riverside friends in the halls and



have a chance to interact between class changes but it really puts a load on the building and tightens up the opportunities for rooms throughout the week and on Sunday. I've been thinking ahead to make sure I am covered for the activities I am in charge of. Stephani mentioned that they are doing remodeling in their building, too, and it has complicated her situation with the Primary. I guess the good news is that the church continues to grow which make necessary these changes.

I'm grateful for the activity, associations, and opportunity for development that church membership has given me throughout my life. Yesterday in Relief Society I was sitting between Claudia Wray and Brenda Godfrey, two of my favorite women. They are a constant source of inspiration. Then I thought about other women I have known; I'm grateful for sweet and capable mentors.

On Tuesday I spoke at a YW in Excellence Program for the Riverside Third Ward. I thought I would like to include with this letter a story that I shared with them that perhaps you children haven't heard but one that has been a favorite of mine since

Grandma Richards' related it to me many years ago.

"My mother (Grandma Ilene) was raised in Pocatello during the Depression years. Her father (Nathan Oscar Robinson) worked for the railroad and many times returned home from work after dark. On these occasions, he would carry his railroad lantern and it would serve to provide him additional light for his journey. One of mother's early childhood memories was of awaiting his arrival, her faced pressed against the window, searching the night for any sign of him. The first thing she would see was a tiny light in the distance, not a stationery light, but a light that moved gently in the night. She knew it was the light of his lantern. Soon his form could be seen brighter and in a few minutes he would be home and she would be in his arms, happy and secure.

Years passed, mother grew and established a family of her own. When her daughters began having their own families she would stay with them for a few days following the birth of a new baby and help them get on their feet again. When my sister, Kathy, had her first baby she lived in Anaheim, California. Although it was quite a considerable distance from Shelley, Idaho to Anaheim, Mother made arrangements to ride the bus. The bus trip involved a layover and transfer in Salt Lake City; Mother was scheduled to arrive at Anaheim at 8:00 a.m. where Dick would pick her up. Just shortly before arriving in Anaheim, Mother became aware that she must have made a mistake, taken the wrong bus, and would arrive at Anaheim at 2:00 a.m. instead of 8.

As the bus arrived at its destination, she discovered that it was not a depot, but a single bench by a street light at the side of the freeway. She disembarked, gathered her luggage, and sat alone in the wee hours of the morning. As she thought about her predicament, she knew that she was in

a potentially dangerous situation and yet she was unable to determine what to do. She began to pray that she would be protected and that she would know who to trust if help was offered. As she sat in the darkness, she became aware of a light in the distance; not a stationery light, but a light that was moving gently in the night. At once she recognized it as a railroad lantern being carried by a man on his way to his early morning work shift. She knew that here was someone that she could trust and so she called to him across the freeway and asked for his help. He responded, crossed the freeway, and helped get her to a phone. Later, as Mother related the story to me, she expressed her testimony of a personal and caring Father in Heaven. She said, "Who but a loving and all-knowing Father could have answered my prayer in such a personal way. He knew me intimately and knew that I would instinctively trust a man with a lantern."

We enjoyed having Mike here over the weekend, it gave us a chance to wish him a happy birthday in person and find out how he is getting along with college life. Several of his close friends are leaving on missions and it is kind of a melancholy time for him as he contemplates the breaking up of the "old gang of mine". When Mike arrived Friday about 5:30, SaraKay, Paul and Tim and I all went out to welcome him home. The minute he got in the house, he opened his duffle bag, got out his HP, and he, Paul, and Tim huddled together showing each other nifty tricks and

games. It made me wonder just who Paul and Tim had really missed—Mike or his HP! I did have some satisfaction though in something Mike said. "Boy, it's great to be home where people feel responsible for their own messes!" Also, "Talk about a paper war; every one of my roommates just throws their mail and newspapers on the table and everywhere! I want to tell them what you tell me, Mom. "Handle it once and put it away!" (Isn't college great!)

[Dad] Last week I had to meet a representative from the Daugherty Foundation at Salmon River High Adventure Base to have an informal audit and see where their money has been spent. We received \$10,000 last year and another like amount this year. I took Rudey Ballard with me so that we could close up the camp and winterize everything. It was fun to cross the river on the cable car and then to go back across by myself to get the auditors and show them around.

We also had a Mormon Relations conference with Elder Max Cramer, an Area Authority. We had about 1325



LDS/Scouting leaders in attendance and were extremely pleased with the response. Prior to the meeting, we hosted a dinner for all the Stake Presidents or their Counselors over Scouting and had a wonderful response from them as well. I for one am grateful for the partnership of the Church and Scouting.

I've been reading a biography of Lord Baden-Powell. I am impressed with the goodness of his family and the broad but spiritual based upbringing they had. At age 11-12 he attended Rose Hill School and the school-mistress said she would gladly have kept him on without any fees of any kind, "so great was his influence on the moral tone of the school." Love to all, DAD

October 30, 1995

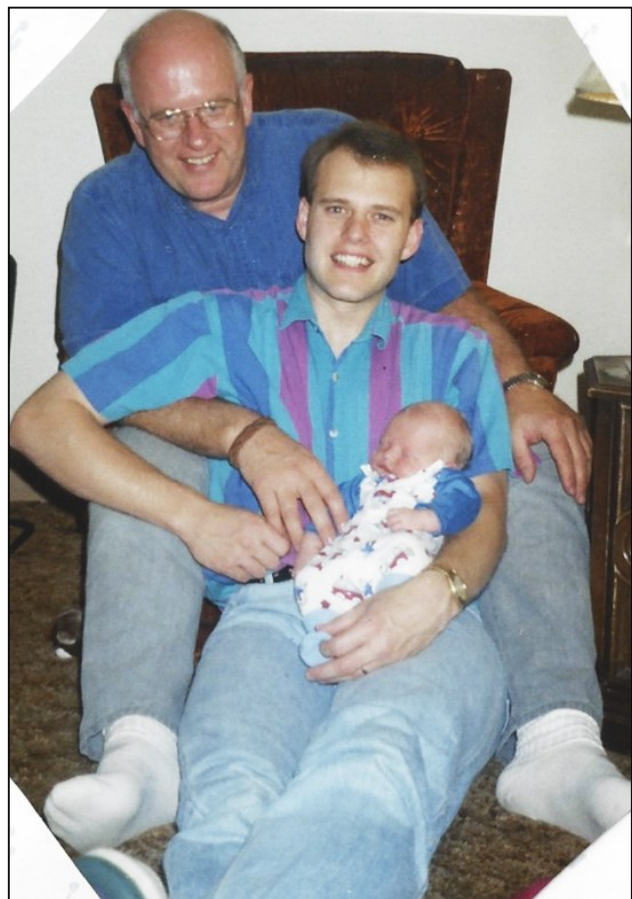
[Mom] Boo! So much for Halloween! (You know how I feel about it already so I won't say anymore). I awoke this morning with a headache. Fortunately I have my trusty Fiorinal that gives me relief and I am able to move ahead with my day's work.

I suspect that part of my headache was a hangover from Sunday. I prepare all week to be able to handle Sunday, but it's still exhausting. Yesterday was our Primary program (my favorite sacrament meeting of the year), but Daddy and I presented our "money management" seminar in the Third Ward's combined Relief Society/Priesthood meeting and we missed the program. I also had a stake choir practice and an ensemble practice that afternoon and rescheduled a rehearsal that was pre-empted by a Young Women In Excellence program. By the time we got home last night from rehearsals, I was beat.

I have been praying the last few days for answers to some problems in our stake music program. We have several wards in our stake that can't seem to put together a ward choir. Their ward members are too busy or just not interested. It comes as no

surprise to me that those same wards have been having problems in other areas and their members feel somewhat alienated from each other. But, how do you help them see that a strong emphasis on music in a ward can bless the lives of both the participant and listener? How do you say (in a non-offensive way) "The Lord will not force you to have a choir, but if you do not take advantage of the opportunity, you will lose the blessing." I know that young families have extenuating circumstances when it comes to choir attendance, but there are usually plenty of youth and middle-aged people who can carry the ball. Enough said!

Let me tell you about our Thursday trip to Provo. We left here about 6:30 a.m. and dropped off some potatoes to Kathy at her place of work. We met Becky, John, and Mike at the student center at 11:00 and had a quick lunch before Mike left to go to his noon class. Because of the situation



last August (moving my parents to Washington) I hadn't helped the kids move in so we took some time and visited John and Becky's apartments. Becky was due at work at 1:00 and so we left her at Liberty Square and then spent some time at John's place. He mentioned in an earlier letter about the stream and ducks. They are just as enchanting as he said they were. We sat at a picnic table under the trees and let Sara Kay feed and play with the ducks. We had just a few minutes to visit with John before driving him to campus for his 1:00 class and then we went to visit the new grandson and proud parents. Bonnie's mother was there helping with the new-baby adjustment and we had a couple of sweet hours with them, holding Nathan, entertaining Rachel, catching up on some visiting with Jean, and talking through Steve's job-hunting situation. Bonnie is healthy, happy and doing well. The baby is beautiful! The only problem we had was to get him to wake up long enough to say hello. He was very contented and slept peacefully through all the hugs, lap transfers, and scintillating conversation.

We met Mike at his apartment at about three. He has a nice situation in the dorms and seems to be making the adjustment to college life. Some of his girlfriends dropped by (at his request) to meet us and we were impressed with them. We left Provo about 3:30 and drove to Fort Williams (west of Lehi) where I left Daddy for his three-day Woodbadge Training. Sara Kay was so worn out that she slept in the back seat most of the way home and I had lots of time to think about the events of the day.

Being in Provo in autumn when the leaves are falling and the hillsides are ablaze with color fills me with nostalgia. As we sat in the student union building awaiting the kids, it seemed like only a few years ago that I was there, a young mother with

toddlers in tow, meeting Daddy for some occasion. But then, there they were, Becky, John and Mike, arm in arm walking towards us, smiling from ear to ear-- **Joy!**

As we went to eat, the kids left their book bags on the table to reserve a spot and headed for the cafeteria. I took a moment to notice the table and three bulging book bags and thought, "Probably hundreds of dollars worth of books right there." A miracle that somehow the money is available for such an experience in their lives-- **Gratitude!**

As we visited at each apartment, leaving potatoes in our wake, I sensed the importance of the BYU experience-- **Growth!**

As we dropped John off and sat watching for a moment as he headed down the sidewalk, a lilt in his step and purpose in his walk--**Wonderment!** (he's home).

As we walked with Mike through the fallen leaves, paused for a moment to visit about the campus, the kids, the upcoming mission--**Reflection!** (he's leaving).

As we entered Steve and Bonnie's homey apartment and took time to marvel at Grandbaby Nathan and check to see that Mom and Dad were surviving--**Contentment!**

The only thing the day lacked was the chance to put our arms around the rest of you who are miles away "seeking your fortunes" and say, "We love you and are grateful for the goodness in your lives."



Let me say a word about Paul. He is in to the frantic senior scene; trying to juggle his time between piano lessons and practicing, AP Classes, church responsibilities, and working four nights a week and Saturdays. He is usually up at 5:45 practicing and keeps the midnight oil burning with homework. We are getting started on scholarship apps and he is filling out housing and entrance forms. For the first time in 17 years, I am wondering why I let him start kindergarten when he was so young. I've tried to convince him to take two years to finish his senior year but somehow my pleas are falling on deaf ears. I have also tried to talk him into Ricks since he could get more scholarship aid, but he is not paying attention to me. John summed it up pretty good when he said, "Mom, BYU blood runs in our veins. See, (pointing to his wrist) it's Blue."

When I returned home Thursday night, I received a call from Steve saying that he has a job offer on the horizon. (The far horizon: Houston). He is being flown to Houston in a couple of weeks to interview and look things over. Also, Spudnik here in

Blackfoot is interested in him and trying to entice him to consider a spot with them. Guess how I am voting. He also had a promising interview with AMS, a company out of Denver that has regional offices throughout the country. Good luck with it all, Steve.

David is starting the search for a fellowship next June. The end is in sight! Linds is planning to return to San Jose in June for awhile at least until he determines exactly what IBM has in mind for him so they'll be moving in June. We are thinking of having a Steve Larsen reunion the second week in June (Randy's only week off this summer) and gather everyone in for a few days. More news forthcoming. Mom

[Dad] *"After silence, that which comes nearest to expressing the inexpressible is music."* -Aldous Huxley. Without singing this family letter to you, your mother has come pretty close to expressing the inexpressible rainbow of feelings as we visited Provo last week. There certainly is something about BYU that seems to be a part of the matrix of our lives. My mind was flooded with memories as we spent those few hours in Provo and on campus.

Much of last week was spent putting together a major gift for the council from a long time scouter, an 80 year old doctor who is still practicing. It was really rewarding to be able to help put together a program for him that would significantly increase the income he will have when he finally retires in a couple of years and also ultimately benefit the Scouts in a major way considering the resources he has available.

The meeting that Sue dropped me off for on our way back from Provo was a Wood Badge Course Directors Conference. It was interesting to be on a military base, sleep in the Bachelor Officer's quarters, eat in the mess hall, and see a little of the activity that was going on there. Our meetings were

very good and helped reinforce the importance of following the handbook. One of the discussions was about trying to eliminate the hugging that sometimes goes on because of the depth of friendships that develop on a course. There have been instances where too intimate of relationships between participants in a patrol or between a staff member and a participant have led to the breaking up of a marriage. Brad said that there was a divorce in our council this year that could be traced back to a Wood Badge course a couple years ago. There have been changes in the guide book and changes in leadership practices that should help to alleviate that problem. I think the best prevention is to just not hug people of the opposite sex who are not members of your family. It is so important to be extremely discreet in your interrelationships with members of the opposite sex. Satan never rests and he will take advantage of any little weakness or indiscretion. Somehow, he can find ways to turn platonic hugs into sensuous ones with intimate messages. As a Bishop I was particularly aware of that danger; priesthood leaders are always counseled to avoid even the appearance of any



indiscretion.

I had a good visit with Dad and Alva Lu last night. They are both in good health and it is such a blessing to see how happy they are. They are leaving for Hawaii on Wednesday for a couple weeks. They are excited! Probably the weather forecast for the end of this week will make them even happier that they are going. DAD

November 6, 1995



[Mom] The highlight of last week for me was our annual stake Auxiliary Training meeting on Wednesday. I had prepared a multi-page handout for each participant and also made some assignments and felt good about the attendance and response. We have had quite a bit

going on with stake conference this next weekend and all the music for that as well as special numbers for the Saturday night session and congregational numbers to select and practice. We found out yesterday that we are getting a new stake presidency so that should add some excitement to the event. I haven't figured out what I am going to do with SaraKay during conference since she is the only family member that won't be singing in the choir.

Sara Kay had quite an eventful week. She dressed up on Halloween and they had a parade and party at school. That night Daddy and I took her "Trick or Treating" and I ended up going to the doors with her since she felt nervous about going alone. We tried to visit each of the elderly members of our ward and it was heart-warming to see their goodness to her. Almost all of them called her by name, invited her in, and gave her nice goodies. That kind of fellowshiping, even to a five-year-old can't help but have a positive impact on her life.

Thursday was my day to volunteer at the school and I took Sara Kay's fish to be shown since it was pet day. Saturday was her first piano recital at the civic center. She started having butterflies on Friday and I offered her a bribe of an ice cream cone if she would follow through and play her duet. She seemed to be satisfied with that and never mentioned being nervous again. Daddy was going to go to the recital with us but he came home from a full day of "University of Scouting" and went to bed with a bad back. He wasn't sure what he did but somehow he wrenched it and it was hurting.

Sara Kay, dressed in her sailor dress and red ribbon, marched right up onto the stage when her turn arrived. She pulled

down the microphone to fit her size and announced her number. Her partner wasn't quite as bold but eventually they got themselves up onto the piano bench and performed "Sweet Betsy from Pike". Sara Kay played her part, separate and apart from what the other little girl was playing and it wasn't until the last few measures that it came together. Following the performance, Sara Kay gave a polite bow, bounded off the stage and ran back to where I was seated. "Wasn't that great!" she asked. How could I not agree?!!

After "trick or treating" on Tuesday, Daddy brought Sara Kay home and I went to the church to the music library to take care of some last minute details for Wednesday's meeting. Tim had arranged for him and some of his friends to play basketball while I was chaperone for the group. The boys played from 7-9 without any adults in sight and because I was alone in the library right



next to the gym I could pretty much hear what was going on. Several times the boys would come out into the hall to use the phone or get a drink. In the two hours I

never heard a crossword or profanity used by anyone. I was interested to learn that most of the young men who were there were in our ward's Young Men's organization. I commented later to Daddy that it would be hard to find a better bunch of boys than the group that was playing ball together that night. They are such an influence for good in each other's lives and a support to quorum members in keeping high standards.

For Paul's essay on his BYU App he has written about the influence church ball has had on him, especially their experiences last year taking second in regionals. I am going to sign off and go shopping for something for my birthday. It has been five years since I could sneak away without being missed. Mom

[Dad] Let me say what a delight it has been for me to work with the young men of our ward. Some have their own special challenges but they are some of the finest young men I know and are supportive of each other.

Last week was a busy one. I spent much of the week following through on details for a major gift and Brad commented on how glad he was that I was in place in this Council to be able to attend to those details. Me too! I also had a presentation at the University of Scouting on District Organization and Mission. Because of the good things that are happening in the Blackfoot District I am looked to as somewhat of an authority on that subject. It is rewarding to feel that some of my efforts are bearing fruit here and helping to strengthen the Scouting program delivered to the boys in this area. With the United Way presentations I have made I used an old Scout Handbook for a visual aid and referred to the hours I spent reading my Dad's Scout Handbook. The promise of adventure and excitement in the outdoors still has magic to it. Do you realize that if a boy attends a troop or patrol meeting every

week, a monthly overnight campout, and spends a week at camp in the summer, he almost spends as much time Scouting as he has spent in the classroom at school?

Another presentation that I had last week was to the folks at Piper Jaffrey in Pocatello. Rick helped line up the meeting and I was able to show them how giving stock to a charity was the least expensive way to make a significant gift. Today I had the opportunity to attend Rotary in Blackfoot and make a presentation to them. It was good to see many old friends and to be able to share our mission and the extent of the Council's efforts to reach young men of all walks of life. It was an interesting coincidence that Dad spoke to the Blackfoot Rotary Club just last week.

The quote for the week is, "*The great end of life is not knowledge but action.*" My love to each of you. DAD

November 13, 1995

[Mom] Yesterday was stake conference and we had a wonderful day. At the Saturday night session Michelle Talbot and Richard Tominaga spoke. Michelle is a young mother of six who recently was diagnosed with a brain tumor and who has undergone surgery to have it removed. (They were not able to get some of it.) She recounted some of the spiritual experiences she's had and some of the lessons she has learned from this trial. She retold the story of Hugh B. Brown who pruned an overgrown bush in his garden. The next day as he was working in his garden he noticed that each cut branch had a small droplet of moisture on it and he imagined that the bush was crying and saying to him, "Why did you prune me. I was growing so well and now look what you have done to me." Hugh B. Brown said he responded, "I am the gardener here and I know what I want you to become." He said that later that season the little bush was



loaded with fruit as a result of his earlier pruning. Later in President Brown's military career he was denied advancement to the rank of a general because of his church membership. Upon returning home from being informed of this denial, he found himself shaking his fist and asking the Lord why he had been denied this blessing. He related that the words of the Lord came into his mind, *"I am the gardener here and I know what I want you to become."* Michelle said that she was learning that her life was in the hands of the Lord and that she should trust in His wisdom and will for her. I was deeply touched by her sweet testimony and thought what a great message that story holds for each of us.

The visiting authorities were Stephen Pond and Glen Pace. Our new stake Presidency is DeVaughn Shipley, president, Gary Korth, first counselor, and Layne Van Orden, second counselor. Daddy and I were very pleased with the new presidency and confided later to President Shipley that about three years ago when he spoke in our ward we both felt that he would someday serve in our stake presidency. He appreciated that vote of confidence and mentioned to Daddy that he (Daddy) was one of the men he had had under serious consideration for a counselor. That was a nice compliment.

Elder Pace's remarks were directed toward relationships and family. He gave some insights into President Hinckley. He recounted accompanying him to a regional conference and being overcome by the response the people had toward the prophet. Later he commented to Pres. Hinckley that looking into the faces of the multitude as they watched the prophet almost made him cry. President Hinckley responded, *"It does make me cry."*

Elder Pace said that on one occasion when he had a few private moments President Hinckley asked him how his son's mission to Russia had been. Elder Pace began to recount the situation in Russia and the progress of the work. Pres. Hinckley stopped him and said, *"No, Glen. How was your son's mission?"* Elder Pace responded that a few days after his son returned they went out to dinner and they were going through the buffet line filling their plates to overflowing. Elder Pace looked back at the start of the line and noticed that his son was just standing there with his empty plate in his hand. He walked back to his son and asked him why he wasn't filling his plate. It was then that he noticed that his son was crying. He said, *"Dad, a few nights ago I was in the home of a faithful Russian convert couple saying good-bye. Before my companion and I left they asked us if they could share some refreshments with us. We watched as the wife removed an apple from a nearly empty cupboard, cut it in two pieces and gave us each a piece."* Elder Pace said that as he finished the story, President Hinckley wept openly.

Friday morning we left about nine for Provo. I packed some sandwiches and we had a quick lunch with Steve and Bonnie. Daddy and the boys left for the bookstore

and Bonnie, Nathan, Sara Kay, and I met the group at the museum at 2:15. We thoroughly enjoyed the “Imperial Tombs of China” exhibit and wandered through the displays together, asking John an occasional question. The whole narrative for the displays was on headphones and individually controlled. It was magnificent!

As we visited in the area prior to beginning the tour, I realized that in a month Steve and Bonnie will be leaving BYU and the dynamics of the Provo group will be altered again. Whenever I get feeling blue about how far-flung we are, I think of what a good influence you are in your respective situations and I say, “Lucky Bloomington, Lucky Coralville, Lucky Cass Lake, Lucky Tempe, and (maybe) Lucky Houston!

Last Sunday John called and told us that he had been called to be the Elder’s quorum president. He was pretty overwhelmed and wondered how he was going to keep up with life. He said that when the stake president interviewed him he asked him if he owned a car. When he said that he didn’t, he told him that he would need one. Thursday morning John called again and commented that he just could hardly do what he needed to do without a car. We visited about some other concerns and I hung up the phone and called Dad at the Blackfoot scout office and told him about the conversation. Although I had a full day planned, I felt impressed to forget my agenda and head into Blackfoot to visit the used car lots. When I arrived at the first lot, I met Daddy visiting with the salesman. We both had felt the same urgency and were impressed to check at the same lot. I asked Daddy if he thought they had the car that Chelsea had turned in on a trade-in five months earlier. (She and her husband Ryan dropped by to visit after they made the trade and told us about the car). Daddy doubted that they would still have it but inquired and found that they did. We took it for a test drive,

checked a few other dealerships, and returned to negotiate on the Celebrity. We knew that it had been a good reliable car (74,000) and had good upkeep and maintenance. I mentioned to the salesman that we knew the car and that we would like to call later with an offer. Before the day was over, we bought the car, secured a license and insurance, and drove it to Provo Friday. Although John didn’t have all the cash up front, he was able to make a sizeable payment on it and will only have to finance a small amount. We truly felt blessed to have been able to take care of the situation so quickly and for a minimum of expense. I better close. I’m leaving to go to Provo to help with Rachel and Nathan while Steve and Bonnie interview in Houston on Thursday.

[Dad] Last week on Tuesday, I spoke at Rotary in Blackfoot for Rudey. It was the first time I have been back to the Blackfoot club since I left when Stephen and David were on their missions because I couldn’t afford the dues. It was rewarding to see many old friends and to be well received by them. That night we took the YM/YW to Deleta, a roller skating rink in Pocatello. We had nine young ladies from the Spanish Branch join us and everyone had a great



time.

On Wednesday, Arlo and I took Randy Smith (an attorney in Pocatello and Chairman of the Idaho State Republican Party) to lunch to bring him up to speed on our endowment efforts in the Council. He told us about three clients of his that had put the Council in their wills and reaffirmed his support. He may be selected for a judgeship after the first of the year and will have a little more time to help us.

I was appreciative of the time together with a large part of the family on Friday as we visited the Tombs of China exhibit. You kids seem so mature and grown up! It was truly interesting to observe the exhibits and learn about the burial practices and beliefs of the Chinese. I was impressed with their knowledge and skills and the artistry exhibited in the objects created to accompany them in death.

Becky was so tired that she fell asleep twice that afternoon while we were there. It was fun to show up with a car for John that we knew he would enjoy and could depend on for a while.

Stake conference was the highlight of the week. At the priesthood leadership session each of the outgoing presidency talked and shared a last message. At the top of my page of notes I made a note to get a hanky before the next session. One of the things Pres. Clement talked about was concern for the number of unwed mothers and concern for the aggressiveness of YW calling YM.

I particularly enjoyed Pres. Bowman's talk. He said, "Love is an action made manifest when you consistently exert yourself to assist another person." He recommended that bishops go through their ward lists and single out people with problems and special needs and pick "guardian angels" to stay close to them. His counsel was to

build other "ministers" besides the Bishopric.

Elder Pond talked about the role of continuing revelation in our lives and referred to a quote from Elder Packer about the need to live worthy of it and the need to ask for it. He suggested taking inventory of what we expose ourselves to and evaluate whether it invites the Spirit. *We should seek specific guidance in our prayers rather than general prayers of blessing.* A quote that I liked was, *"Talking about doctrine will have greater impact on behavior than talking about behavior."*

Elder Pace's remarks were directed initially at the Proclamation. It is one of five issued in the history of the Church. We should study it together as husbands and wives and then as families and make sure we are living it entirely. He defined fanatic as *"once having lost sight of your objective, you double your efforts."* Most of the rest of his remarks were directed at bringing others to the temple and then making sure we make it, too. He said purification has nothing to do with office or position—it has to do with self. He also said that we should each receive a spiritual confirmation of our call—then we should magnify our call that we may be magnified in our call. He also remarked that we are experiencing a leadership training emphasis in the Church now in coordination with the three-fold mission of the Church that we are starting to get a handle on after 18 years.

Saturday night he talked about how most testimonies are surfacy; we need to spend more time in deeper meditation and heavy pondering to develop deeper testimonies that will carry us through the tests now and the even greater tests to come. He also said to welcome the golden moments of adversity as a friend—that the greatest insights are often preceded by the darkest hour. The rest of conference has been covered by your mother. It was a rich spiritual conference. The Choir was great

and it was a joy to be a part of it and to have Paul and Tim there also. Your mother did a great job leading the music. The ward choir honored her for her birthday. Love, DAD

November 21, 1995

[Dad] Elder William R. Bradford said, *"Within each of us there is an intense need to feel that we belong. This feeling of unity and togetherness comes through the warmth of a smile, a handshake, or a hug, through laughter and unspoken demonstrations of love. It comes in the quiet reverent moments of soft conversation and in listening. It comes from a still small voice reminding us that we are brothers and sisters, the children of a Heavenly Father."* How true that statement is! I believe that much of the satisfaction of that expressed need to feel that we belong comes from those near and dear to us in our family. When that need is met there, it isn't as crucial that outside forces come to bear to meet it. But those unspoken demonstrations of love are important as are overt expressions. There is something that happens to the expressor as well as the expressees when those expressions are conveyed.

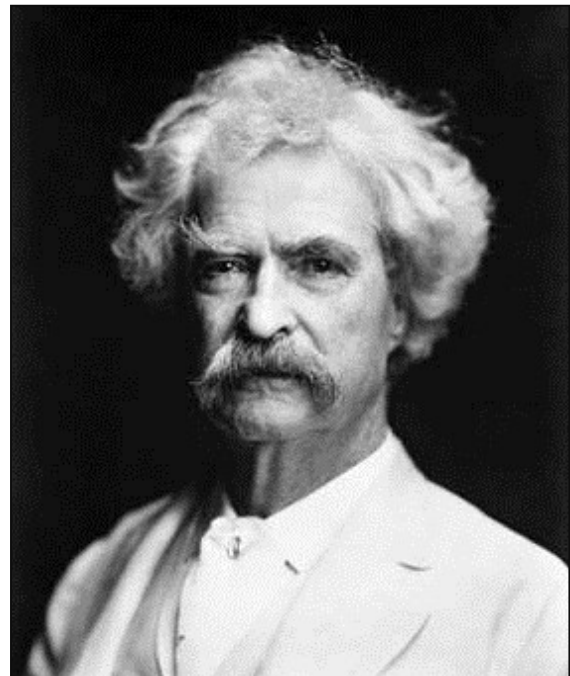
Last week I finally had my interview with Brad regarding my Critical Achievements for the year. It was a good and rewarding interview as he reassured me how happy he was to have me aboard and the good things I am accomplishing for the Council. Another demonstration of our innate need to feel needed and appreciated, even in the workplace.

On Wednesday night I went to the Iron Horse District Recognition Dinner. I had a dual purpose in being there—first, to represent the council staff and secondly, to award Wood Badge beads to James Hunter, one of my beavers from a year and a half ago. I just have one more to go to be

able to have 100% of my squad. It was good to visit with him and his wife and to recognize the quiet reassurance of belonging that comes in so much of our social interaction if we let it. How important it is to be able to express and convey a feeling of love and respect through a smile, a handshake, a meeting of the eyes, and through acts of courtesy.

Another interesting experience of last week was going with about 80 explorers and 10 leaders on a tour of the site. We were able to go on two INEL busses with a tour guide on each bus telling about the history of the site, job opportunities, current projects, and all in a very entertaining way. The boys (and the adults) thoroughly enjoyed the afternoon. It was the first time I've been there on any kind of tour since I was a kid.

The hardest thing last week was giving up Sue for a few days. I was grateful that our family situation was such that we could do that for Bonnie and Steve so they could go for their interview in Houston with more peace of mind. We got along fine but didn't eat quite as well or economically. Whenever I called she would rave about how beautiful and wonderful Rachel and



Nathan were. I know that is the case with each of our grandchildren—they are all beautiful and wonderful!

Mark Twain said, *“Inherently, each one of us has the substance within to achieve whatever our goals and dreams define. What is missing from each of us is the training, education, knowledge and insight to utilize what we already have.”*

We empathize with each of you in the challenges you are wrestling with. I am sure that this is the Lord’s way of training, educating, and imparting knowledge and insight to us to enable us to utilize what we have within us. It is interesting how sharing in your experiences and feelings reemphasizes and renews my own learning and insights and because of my age makes them even more poignant and deep.

Thanks for sharing with your mother and me. I hope and pray that we are able in some small way to buoy you up and reinforce our love and the feelings from the Spirit that we are all sons and daughters of a Heavenly Father who loves us! Love, DAD

[Mom] One of the byproducts of my visit to Provo was the opportunity to visit with Mike, John, and Becky. I gave the boys haircuts and Becky came for lunch and one day brought lunch for me. It was nice to have some quality time with the kids during my three-day stay and feel a part of things in Provo. It was also a good experience for Sara Kay since she was my right hand man in keeping Rachel occupied and happy. It was interesting to see her in the role of big sister since her position as the “baby” of the family has deprived her of some of those types of experiences. When Nathan was born Sara Kay said, “I don’t think I am going to like this baby.” I was surprised by that response and questioned her about it. “Because it’s a boy!” I forgot about that conversation until one day while I was feeding Nathan, she came up and rubbed her finger against his soft cheek and said,

“This is the nicest baby in the world.” I realized that she’s had very little opportunity to be around any baby and that she was learning how precious they are. It made me also feel a little melancholy about having so many of you so far away that we aren’t able to share your lives quite as much as we would like to.

When I arrived home Saturday night, Daddy and the boys had the house all spiffed up and the laundry done. Daddy had even gone grocery shopping and bought what we needed to get us through the weekend. He with Paul and Tim had attended the state championship game at the Holt Arena that afternoon and watched Snake River win the title. (Wish BYU would have done as well.)

Saturday night Grandpa Larsen called and said that they were home from their trip to Hawaii. They had hit all the tourist stops including the famed Polynesian Cultural Center, the temple, and had a chance to attend church on the islands. It’s always good to have them home safe and sound.

Paul had his interviews Sunday for his BYU and Ricks apps and sent in his first scholarship form last Wednesday. He is going to test the scholarship waters at the Y, Ricks, and Logan, and then make a decision. He is keeping a pretty rigorous schedule with all he is involved in but he seems to be handling it okay.

Tim started basketball tryouts yesterday morning at 6:15. He developed a bad cold and was sick yesterday during tryouts. He started to vomit so he called me and I went and brought him home. We got some penicillin for his strep throat and doctored him up to go again today. With only three days of tryouts, he doesn’t dare miss even though he is feeling miserable. We hope this won’t ruin his chance to be on the team. He has worked so hard to be prepared and now to have this happen is really upsetting. It has made him realize



how dependent he is for the Lord's blessings.

Sara Kay is starting to read. She surprises herself when she sounds out a word and can actually figure out the story. She is learning to play Jingle Bells and looking forward to playing it so her class can sing it with her accompanying. She loves school and is doing well. Each week she comes home with handouts from the school psychologist with advice on what we as parents can do to improve her abilities and learning. I can't help but think about Shauntel and her role in the lives of the children in her area of stewardship in Iowa.

Jonie called and mentioned that a couple of weeks ago she and Jeff were presented a special award recognizing them for their efforts in the home and community. It included a \$300 cash award and special commendation written on a plaque. I know Jonie has worked very hard in Cass Lake to serve on school committees and do her

share to upgrade the situations there. Congratulations, Jonie and Jeff for all your efforts! It's nice to know people notice all that you have done to bring improvements.

We are trying to get things ready for Thanksgiving and our company. Steve and Bonnie are arriving today so that Steve can interview with Spudnik here in Blackfoot. Becky, John, and Mike will come tomorrow. We have the gym reserved to play ball Thursday morning and then eat and relax the rest of the day. Friday we are having Nathan blessed here at home since Steve needs to get back to work Saturday. They thought that more family could be present if they did the blessing here in Idaho.

I know it won't be too restful of a weekend because the kids have papers due and hope to get in some good study time while they are here. Steph and Linds and family are en route this morning to Washington D.C. to visit Lind's aunt and tour the museums and sights there. Sounds fun.

This will be the last year that the nation's capital will be so close for them and I'm grateful they have this opportunity. Hope each of you has a wonderful holiday. You will be in our thoughts and prayers. We love you and are grateful this season of the year and always for your love and goodness.

November 27, 1995

[Mom] We really had a wonderful week complete with good food, family time, and special occasions. Let me quickly recap the highlights. Steve and Bonnie were the first to arrive on Wednesday. Steve interviewed and toured the Spudnik facility with Kent Fife. He was impressed with the set up and had an opportunity to meet several of the other personnel.

When Paul and Tim arrived home from school, Tim announced that he made the team as a point guard. He is excited about the opportunity and had his first official practice this morning at 6:15. Many of his close friends also made the team so he will have a nice group of boys to play with. Becky, John, Mike, and a friend arrived a while later. Thursday morning we held our annual volleyball game following a busy morning of last minute preparations for dinner. Following dinner, we watched football, slept, and ate pie.

Friday evening we hosted a family get-together and Nathan was blessed. It was a very special evening. Everyone was dressed in Sunday best and Grandpa and Grandma Larsen and Uncle Gary were able to be with us as well as Bonnie's grandparents, brothers, and parents. Steve gave Nathan such a sweet blessing and it was touching to see the brothers join the grandfathers and great-grandfathers in the circle. Bonnie and I opted to keep things simple and we

served banana splits for dessert. It made for a lovely occasion and gave us some visiting time with extended family, too.

Steve and Bonnie needed to get back to Provo for work Saturday so they left that morning but Mike, Matt (dorm friend), Becky, and John stayed the whole weekend. It felt good to have time to talk through college business, job opportunities, and check to make sure that everything was in line for second semester. The computer was kept busy with term papers and everyone felt like they'd had a good break from the rigors of college life. I was grateful that we all stayed healthy and could enjoy the weekend. Tim is still not totally better and Rachel was not feeling good Friday night, but for the most part, we were able to get through without having the flu that is so prevalent.





Mike and his friends organized a big skating party for Saturday night and left here about 8:30 for Pocatello in Nathan Hill's van. About 11:30 we got a call telling us that the van was stalled at the Fort Hall Trading Post and asking if we could help retrieve the seven stranded couples. John had been downstairs visiting with Tim and Paul and he offered to help us so he went after some of them and Dr. Hill was able to get the rest of the couples in his car. Becky had a late date that night in Idaho Falls and Paul was working at Kesler's until 11:00. I knew Paul had an 8:00 a.m. quartet practice the next morning and so I was hoping to get to bed relatively early but I should have known better. By the time the last child checked in for the night, I was reminded how nice it is to have the college kids in Provo where I'm not so involved in their hectic lives.

The four-day vacation also refreshed my memory about how much college boys eat. By the time we fed those big boys three meals a day and several snacks in between and at midnight, I was wondering if we were going to have anything left. Hopefully the rest of you had a good holiday. I know that several of you were traveling and I

assume that "no news is good news" when it comes to hearing from you.

Well, it has finally happened—we broke down and bought a fake Christmas tree. Last Friday, Melani Hanni went to a Walmart sale and bought a couple of trees thinking she was getting one for Fresh's. When she got home she found out that Marilyn had gone to town and bought

her own. So she called us to see if we wanted it. For \$20 we felt we couldn't go wrong. For home evening last night we set it up and Sara Kay commented this morning, "In the dark and from far away the tree looks real doesn't it? I know it will be a lot safer and save a lot of hassle shopping for trees. It really does look pretty realistic and I think we will be happy with it.

[Dad] The last two Monday nights we have been practicing a song with Dwight & Debbie Gardner, Bruce & Debbie Ellis, Kent & Sue Fife, and Rulon & Lori Cammack. It has been a lot of fun to sing together and I am amazed at the musical strength from the five couples. We are singing to a taped background and it really fills our house.

Thanksgiving was a truly delightful time. It was a joy to have family able to gather. To be honest (and my age is showing here) it was also nice to see the taillights of cars headed to Provo again after three days. I guess I am getting spoiled with the nice quiet life we have here. It is a lot easier to have quality time with each of you with one family here at a time. With everyone here the demands for food preparation and clean up are staggering. Mom did a phenomenal job with the meals and

everyone had PLENTY to eat! Love you, DAD



December 4, 1995

[Mom] Daddy is home sick with the flu today, although he isn't as sick as Tim and Sara Kay were. Paul had a touch of it last week and I'm still holding my own. (Mine will probably hit the night of the stake choir concert or something like that.) I thought this morning would be a nice quiet morning but much to my surprise, Paul and Tim arrived home about 10, explaining that the water at the high school was off and so was school for the day. Paul is sitting at my side filling out scholarship forms and Tim has gone to town with a friend to get wristbands and socks for basketball. Doesn't seem possible that Tim's friends are old enough to drive! Tim is enjoying basketball and looking forward to his first game this Thursday.

Tomorrow is Sara Kay's first school Christmas program and she is Dancer in the reindeer line-up. Wednesday is Daddy's orchestra concert and he is playing a trumpet solo. He has really been practicing but is apprehensive about it. We've invited Grandpa and Grandma Larsen to come.

Saturday is our first stake choir practice for the Christmas concert. I'm hoping and praying that people will respond to the

invitation to join us. It has been very involved as I've been preparing for a musical program for the ward party on the 12th, two stake practices on the 9th and 16th, a stake concert on the 17th, and an all musical sacrament meeting on the 24th. We are also trying to pull together a simple choir party after our choir rehearsal the

morning of the 23rd. The choir members continue to come and give support; in times like this I want to give each a big hug for their devotion! We are also having a youth choir that will perform on two occasions that Kent Fife is directing and that has about 25 young people in it from the ward. I am so proud of our ward and the effort people are making. I'm enjoying my music calling although it does get stressful. Mom

[Dad] This past week has been a relatively quiet one, especially when compared with Thanksgiving the week before. Tuesday night we went to a Men's Chorus and Women's Chorus concert. We had two "men" involved—Tim and Paul, and we were really impressed with the performances of both groups. John Grayson has done an excellent job leading these kids although he isn't much better than Mrs. Jensen on discipline.

Orchestra was a little more intense as we look forward to the concert next week. I probably shouldn't have let Linnea talk me into playing a solo, but I hope it will work out alright. I also was asked to help with a

brass quartet to play for a Thomas ward's Christmas party. I'm playing with Bill Hammond, his son Nathan, and Marlin Baker. We practiced on Saturday and it sounded good. Your mother wants us to also help with the Stake Choir Concert.

Under the sink the smell has been getting worse and more signs of leaking lately. I touched one pipe and a hole appeared, it was so far gone. The garbage disposal has also been leaking quite badly, so I spent Saturday morning plumbing and replacing the disposal. Everything looks tight and clean without any leaks and odors for another 13 years.

We were at the church for choir practice yesterday and then stayed for the 1st Presidency Christmas Devotional. We thrilled again with beautiful sounds of the Mo Tab Choir and the beauty of the tabernacle and temple square alight for the season. The messages from each of the brethren helped to set the tone for a proper Christmas season of giving and sharing centered on Christ.

Last week I read a talk by William J. Bennett that was so powerful and insightful



that I shared it with Sue. I would like to get it copied and share it with each of you also. He said *"When the rest of the world looks at America they see no longer a 'shining city on a hill'. Instead, they see a society in decline, with exploding rates of crime and social pathologies."* As he discusses evidences of that decline he submits that the real crisis of our time is spiritual. *"Whatever your faith—or even if you have none at all—it is a fact that when millions of people stop believing in God, or when their belief is so attenuated as to be belief in name only, enormous public consequences follow."* He quoted Samuel Johnson as saying, *"How small, of all that human hearts endure, That part which laws or kings can cause or cure!"* Solutions are not to be found in the political arena—there are limits to what the state can do in imparting values and forging character. One of the solutions he mentions—*"...we desperately need to recover a sense of the fundamental purpose of education, which is to provide for the intellectual and moral education of the young."* Another—*"...as individuals and as a society, we need to return religion to its proper place. Religion, after all, provides us with moral bearings. It provides society with a moral anchor—and nothing else has yet been found to substitute for it."* From my readings there is a strong consciousness of the need for imparting strong ethical values to our youth to help solve the spiritual malaise that pervades our country. I appreciate each of you and your part in the answer rather than being a part of the problem. DAD

December 11, 1995

[Mom] Last week was busy and rewarding. Sara Kay was in a Christmas program on Tuesday night and Daddy and I thoroughly enjoyed watching her and all the other cute elementary kids perform. At that age you can expect anything and usually get it, but the audience loved every minute of it and we came away renewed and entertained

and grateful for young children and their innocence and enthusiasm. Sara Kay was a reindeer, complete with antlers, collar, and large black nose. Friday when she got



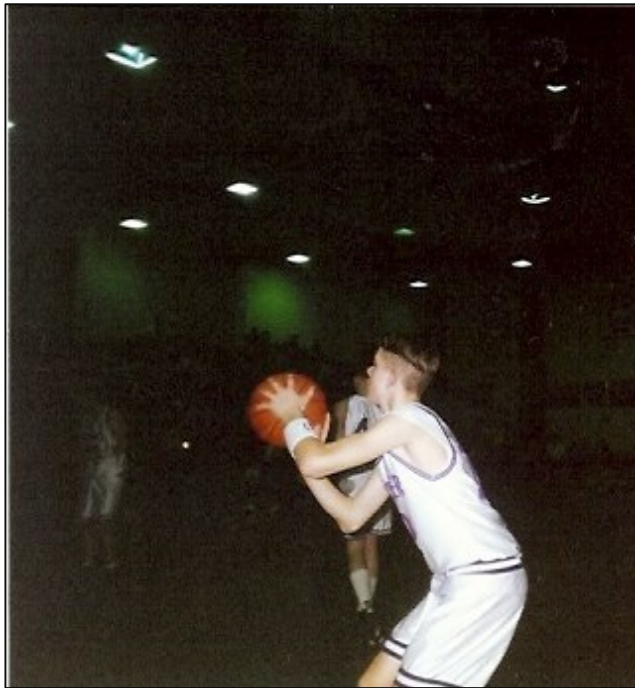
home from school she had on an elephant hat. It was a band of grey construction paper that fit around her head with two large ears attached to each side of the band and a large trunk that hung down between her eyes and flopped as she walked. When she came in the back door wearing the strange apparatus, I just about cracked up. She wore it most of the day and every time I looked at her I had to chuckle. (to myself of course.) I wondered why this uninhibitedness disappears as we get older. You probably couldn't pay a first grader to walk around looking like that and yet her teacher said they had a whole herd of elephants walking around school that day learning about the letter "E". I love it!

Wednesday night was Daddy's orchestra concert. We picked up Grandpa Larsen and went as a family. Last year Daddy commented that surely the family should

support him when he has sat through so many piano and choir performances over the years. We agreed and were there for him this time in full force. But, full force isn't quite as big as it used to be with just five of us in the family these days. It was a thrill to hear Daddy play "Cherry Pink and Apple Blossom White" and then afterwards to hear the many compliments received. He was a little nervous but got along fine. About five that morning someone's alarm went off and I went to get Tim up for ball practice. Daddy said that he might as well go wake him since he (Daddy) had been awake since 3:30 worrying about his performance that day. I knew he must really be nervous since he hardly lets anything keep him from a good night's sleep.

Thursday night we attended Tim's first ball game. It was with a team about 1/3 the size of Snake River and we won the game handily. Tim played about half the time and made five points. He has another game tonight and one Wednesday. It's always a bit unnerving to start a new season because with a new coach, everything changes and it takes a while to get a feel for what the coach expects. I could tell that Tim wasn't playing with as much confidence as I expected but later he said that the coach told them if they made certain mistakes he would pull them right out of the game and I saw him do it to several players so I guess it made all the players a little nervous.

We celebrated Daddy's birthday with a steak dinner and banana cream pie, watched a video, and bought him a new winter hat. I think he had a good day. He appreciated the calls and cards and gifts from everyone. The best news of the day was to find out that Steve and Bonnie have employment in Salt Lake and that the job Steve really wanted came through. That's great! They will be moving the first of January.



Saturday morning was our first stake choir practice for the concert on the 17th. I had given out invitations through the ward choir directors and advertised the practice in the ward bulletins but I still had my doubts about people coming. I went over to get ready at 7:30 a.m. and people started coming about 7:45. We filled the choir seats and had standing room only. I've had people asking if they can still participate if they missed last week's practice and I've been excited to double our numbers. It was

such a thrill to lead that big choir, and the songs came together with very little effort. Our ward choir has been preparing for two months for this concert and Sunday night at practice I finally felt like we were ready. We had a wonderful turnout! Daddy and I are also singing in a couples group at the ward party tomorrow and we stayed afterward to practice for that and then hurried to Pocatello for the annual "Messiah sing-along". Daddy's volunteer counterpart in the council is partially in charge of the evening so we have done our best to support him these past three years. Dad invited Rick and Terry to join us and Paul came along, too, and we had a fun evening.

This morning I hosted my visiting teacher group (six ladies) for a luncheon. It took me most of the morning to make rolls, fix a chicken casserole, clean up from Saturday, set the table and have things ready but it turned out nice. Tonight we are going to another ballgame for home evening and Paul has a performance and Chamber's practice.

Paul's two bits: *I was thinking about all the things that are going on in my life right now. I realized that the things I'm going through are probably quite similar to the experiences that you went through at this stage of your life so I thought you might enjoy re-living them through me (Steve, Dave, and Becky, the deprived trio, you can skip the first part because it's about Kesler's Market, the place that you never had the privilege to work). I work at Kesler's Market now. When I interviewed for a job at Kesler's, Jack said that if I was half the worker the rest of my brothers and sisters were, I'd be an excellent employee. Well, as it turns out, I'm twice the worker the rest of you were, and I'm sure Jack is going to inform me of this fact any day now.*



I'm almost done with Mr. Odell's infamous "Advanced Composition" course. I have but one more composition to write. Actually, I should be working on my final comp. right now instead of doing this, but I know Mom won't get mad at me for writing in the family letter instead of working on my composition. The Chamber's Christmas show is on the 18th and 19th. We are not ready (if you can believe that!) The Chamber's president is No' el Martin, and she has assumed the role of Supreme-Dictator-for-Life and has taken it upon herself to be unusually grouchy and cruel to all of us. I know she's just trying to do her job, but sometimes I just want to tell her, "Cool it, turbo!" To illustrate this point, the other night we had a rehearsal. Before we began, a girl passed out stickers. She said we were to put them on our faces so that whenever we turned to talk to someone, we would see the sticker on their

face, and it would remind us to not talk. Of course, we all thought this was a brilliant idea. Surprisingly, it proved to be as ineffective as the practice of "zipping our lips shut" in elementary school. As the noise and talking increased, Noel yelled, "People, You're already forgetting the stickers!"

I thought to myself, "I can't believe we forgot the stickers." Anyway, hopefully we'll be ready by the 18th. I better close and work on my comp. I hope I brought back some grand high school memories and filled your heart with nostalgic stuff. Love, Paul

Christmas '95

With the coming of the holiday season, come thoughts of each of you and of experiences shared. Thank goodness for Christmas time and the motivation it gives us to "keep in touch" despite the years and distances that separate us. For us, '95 will be remembered as the year of the student. Stephani's husband, Lindsay, is a student at Indiana University in his final year of his doctorate program. Stephani continues to keep busy with Katie, Sam, and Joshua and as Primary president. Shauntel's husband, Randy, is in medical school at University of Iowa and Shauntel is enjoying her work with the children of the Cedar Rapids District where she works as a school psychologist. Stephen and Bonnie welcomed a new son, Nathan, to their growing family in October and are looking forward to Steve's completion of his Master's from BYU this month. David and Andrea reside in Tempe, Arizona, where David is in his final year of his Master's program in hospital administration at ASU. They welcomed little Angela Susan in June. Another highlight of their year was the baptism of their Korean neighbors who they have fellowshipped since moving to Tempe.

Rebecca returned from her mission in March (Oklahoma, Tulsa) and is a senior at the “Y”, starting her student teaching in January, and working part-time at the MTC. John returned from his mission (Taiwan Taichung) in August and is also attending BYU as a junior engineering student. Mike graduated as valedictorian of his class in June and is enjoying being a freshman at the “Y” and the opportunity to be with several siblings in Provo. Paul is a busy senior trying to juggle school, work, piano lessons, and other demands and still find time for filling out college and housing applications and scholarship forms. Tim is a freshman and recently made the school basketball team. His 6:15 a.m. practices have complicated our morning routine but it’s fun to follow the team and watch him play.

Sara Kay also joined the ranks of “student” this year and is thoroughly enjoying her kindergarten experience.

Steve and I keep busy keeping pace with the “comings and goings” of the bunch. Steve’s work with BSA has been very rewarding and he continues to enjoy the association with the professionals as well as the wonderful volunteers. He serves as YM president in the ward and relishes the opportunity to interact with the priests quorum and help provide a good program for his own growing sons. I am still ward choir director and have added stake music chairman to my list of responsibilities. We send you warm greetings at this memorable time of year when we reflect on the life of the Savior and the gift of the Atonement in our lives. We recognize the Lord’s goodness to us and pray for His continued blessings to you and yours.

Steve, Sue, and kids

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13	– Mom and Dad; Paul
14	– Mike
15	– Carolyn Cook; Debbie Gardner; Kim Harper; Pam Cox; Janet Jenks; Mom
16	– Mike and Cami Hansen; Tosh Keller and Elizabeth Watt
17	– Dad and Bishop Godfrey w/ priests quorum; Bishop and Sister Moon
18	– Dad; SaraKay
19	– Dad with Council professionals
20	– Mike; Sister Larsen
21	– Bishop Godfrey; Sister Larsen
22	– Mike with friend
23	– Paul; Mike after Shanandoah
24	– Paul; Steph with Josh; Shauntel with Katie and Sam
25	– Brandon Hawker/Mike's campaign; President Hinckley
26	– Baby Joshua
27	– Sister Larsen/Sister Yarborough
28	– Paul
29	– Lindsay and Stephani with kids in Bloomington, Indiana; Michael Ballam
30	– Mike and MaryAnn Day; Paul, Bret Turpin, Merritt Van Orden and Doug

	White
31	– Mike with Grandpa and Grandma Larsen
32	– Paul, Andy Davis, Mike, Merritt; Dave and Andrea and Laurel
33	– Dave and Andrea and Laurel
34	– Sam, Katie, and Josh
35	– Steve, David, Dad, Dave and Andrea
36	– Sister Larsen; Mike and Sabrina Dance
37	– Cottam's and Larsen's
38	– Cory, Sydney, and SaraKay; Mike and Paul
39	– Tim; Mike, Paul, Bret Turpin
40	– Paul, Mike, Mom, Randy
41	– Mom and Mike
42	– Cory Katseanes; Dad at Expo
43	– Mike, Paul, Tim at Devil's Tower; Grand Tetons
44	– John in Taiwan; Tim
45	– Mom, Mike, and Judge Brower
46	– Mike, SaraKay, Katie and Sam; Nauvoo Temple site
47	– Alladin, Wyoming Mercantile with Paul, Tim, Mike, and local; SaraKay, Mom, and Tim at Nauvoo Monuments
48	– Alladin Mercantile
49	– Carthage Jail
50	– Tim; Dad
51	– Mike, Mrs. Jensen, and Andy Davis; Carthage Jail visit
52	– Alladin Mercantile; Mike and Paul
53	– SaraKay @Nauvoo; Bonnie with Rachel
54	– Rachel; Dave, Andrea, Mom, Bonnie
55	– New baby Rachel; Carthage Jail
56	– Tim w/Thayne Page; One of Nelson twins with Paul; Steve, Paul, Bonnie
57	– Steve, Mom, and Bonnie with Baby Rachel
58	– Tim
59	– Tim at Cedar Badge
60	– Camp Little Lemhi

61	-	Dad
62		Shanandoah; Leonard Pretl; Rachel
63	-	Randy and Shauntel @ Niagara Falls
64	-	Rick Tew; Dad
65	-	Lord Baden Powell
66	-	Dad @ Woodbadge
67	-	Chad and Trish (1993 wedding)
68	-	Tim
69	-	Keith and Maggie wedding
70	-	Sister Larsen; Paul and Nelson twin
71	-	Dave and Andrea with Laurel
72	-	Steve, Paul, Mike; Tim and SaraKay
73	-	David and Laurel; Mom and AlvaLu
74	-	Dad, Mike, Paul, Christian, Mom
76	-	Mom/SaraKay; Dad, Mom, Rachel
77	-	Mike, Paul, Tim and friends at Philmont
78	-	Philmont Hike Paul, Mike, Tim
79	-	Women's group at Philmont
80	-	Youth Group
81	-	Dad's class at Philmont
82	-	Paul's Table Rock Hike
83	-	Lindsay; Paul
84	-	Mike and Annaleise Allen
85	-	Paul and Tim with Don Aslett; Brodie Hannie and Tim
86	-	Allen boy and tired Tim
87	-	Mike and Sabrina Dance on student council fair parade float
88	-	Tim at Eagle Project; Tim and Brodie
89	-	Tim with Forest Ranger
90	-	Tim
91	-	Marlayne and Kirk engagement picture; Sam
92	-	Tim and Brodie; Paul
93	-	John, Becky, Mike, and David; Mom and Dad
94	-	Laurel in Mesa, Arizona
95	-	Harvest crew: Paul, Mike and Tim
98	-	Patricia Pinegar, General Primary President; Paul at Table Rock

99	-	Reunion at Provo Canyon
100	-	John with Jeff Cook, Mom and Dad
101	-	Paul with Cami Hansen
102	-	Mike with Sabrina Dance; SaraKay
103	-	Dad with his usual happy smile
104	-	New Bountiful Temple
105	-	Allan
107	-	Laurel
108	-	Mike; Sister Larsen
109	-	Serjio Prado, Celeste, three children, and Serjio's Sister at home in Missouri in Becky's mission; SaraKay
110	-	Tim, Brodie, Paul, Brandon, Mike; SaraKay (the circus fat lady)
111	-	Sam, Josh, and Katie
113	-	Mike's graduation picture
114	-	Calm in the midst of the storm
115	-	Mike and Paul
116	-	President Spencer W. Kimball; Paul
117	-	Paul, Mom and Dad
118	-	Mike
119	-	Tim's Eagle
120	-	Paul and friends; Mike and Sally Ogden
121	-	John's Mission Roster
122	-	Hugh Nibley; Pres. Heber J. Grant
123	-	Mom and Dad
124	-	Paul on stage
125	-	Idaho Falls Temple
126	-	Mike and friends after concert; Bountiful Temple
127	-	Paul's group
128	-	Chelsea and Ryan Pike's wedding
129	-	Mike and Brandon; Tim
133	-	Tim's team
134	-	Tim as point guard
135	-	Coach Anderson, Tim; Mike
136	-	Mike with Mr. VanOrden
137	-	Varsity Woodbadge staff
138	-	Mike's ward basetball team; Bruce R. McConkie

139	–	Merritt VanOrden, Paul, Bret Turpin, B.J. Driscoll in Music Man
140	–	Mike, Tim, Paul; Tim with homemade shelf he made in shop
141	–	Steve and David in MTC
142	–	Deneice and Don's family at 50th
143	–	Paul and Merritt
144	–	Tim's team
145	–	Family of Josephine and Ernest Ellswood: Grandma Barbara is the baby on her father's lap; ten virgins
147	–	Paul and SaraKay
148	–	Paul and Nelson twins
149	–	Merritt, Mike, Sabrina, and Paul
151	–	Our good neighbors, Hanni's
152	–	Mike with Sharee Mortimer
153	–	Brodie
154	–	Tim and Brodie serve dinner; Brad and Danzelle Allen
155	–	Paul and Annalese Barnard
156	–	Elder Larsen in Taiwan
158	–	Becky's homecoming
159	–	Becky's homecoming
160	–	Becky and Paul Page; Becky's homecoming w/ little brothers
161	–	Tera Adams, Becky, Candice Harrington, Merrilee Esplin; Becky's homecoming
162	–	Becky, Mrs. Jensen, Merritt Van Orden @ Abravenal Hall in SLC
163	–	Uncle Dick, Michelle Dubois, Becky, and Bonnie
164	–	Music Man
165	–	Paul and friends at dance
166	–	Dad and Dave Hermansen @ Wood Badge
167	–	Grandpa and Grandma Richards as temple workers in St. George
168	–	Dad teaching at Wood Badge
169	–	Mike and Ben Hammond; President Joseph F. Smith
170	–	Becky teaching at MTC

171	–	Morris Benson family; Dad at camp
172	–	Paul
173	–	More Music Man
174	–	Mike at Elk's Lodge
175	–	Paul
176	–	Etc.
177	–	Becky at MTC
178	–	Becky, Mike; SaraKay and Laurel
179	–	SaraKay collage
180	–	Paul
181	–	Mike and Sally Ogden; Paul with a bevy of beauties
182	–	SaraKay
183	–	Tim
184	–	Becky at MTC
185	-	Cheiko Okazaki
186	-	Paul and Valerie Firth
187	–	Paul's group for prom
188	–	Paul after Chamber's concert
189	-	David and Laurel
190	–	Paul, Toni Watson, and Greg Jenks
191	–	(2013) John and Laurel w/some of John's missionary friends in Taiwan
192	–	Tim ((1983)
193	–	SaraKay (1990) Mike's graduation
194	–	Graduation night
195	–	Still graduation night
196	–	Andy Davis and Mike hinting that they are men
197	–	More graduation
198	–	Mike's frog legs and Matt Pretl
199	–	Etc.
200	–	Laurel and new Baby Angela
201	–	Angela Susan
202	–	Dave and his girls
203	–	Mike
204	–	Tim, Paul, and Angela
205	–	Wood Badge Staff 1995
206	–	Mike and Maren Gentry; Ron Mangum

207	–	Grandpa and Grandma Richards
208	–	Allan and AlvaLu
209	–	David and Stephen (1970)
210	–	Emily Larsen
214	–	Randy Cox
	–	Mike and Paul's priest quorum
216	–	Randy Cox
217	–	Mike rappelling
218	–	Etc.
219	–	Paul rappelling; priest quorum
221	–	Stephani and kids visit from California
222	–	Tim gets mauled by Katie and Sam
223	–	Welcome home, John
224		Sam, SaraKay, and Katie; Angela
225	–	John's welcome home; Steve reads to SaraKay and Laurel
226	–	Paul, Mike, David Hammond; Angela
227	–	John's jet lag with Angela
228	–	Sue Fife practices with us
229	–	John's welcome home on second Tuesday of next week; jet lagged
230	–	Cottam's, Sally Ogden, Maren, Candice Harrington join us for Saturday night party for John
231	–	Grandpa takes nap with Angela
232	–	Dave and Andrea bless Angela Susan and then rush off to catch their flight
233	–	Looks like an old used car lot
234	–	David, Laurel, Becky; G & G Richards
235	–	Happy reunion!
236	–	Mike moves into dorm at BYU
237	–	Becky and John at BYU
238	–	Good times together for John's homecoming
239	–	Proud kindergartener
240	–	John, Becky, and Mike at BYU
241	–	Back yard visit
242	–	Togetherness
243	–	Tim with Angela; Ray Taylor family
244	–	Tim with Shane Jenks and Ryan Anderson at cross country meet

245	–	Etc.
246	–	Coach Ed Jackson with team
247	–	SaraKay's class with Mrs. Hunt
248	–	Manuel Travino (1975)
249	–	John Carmack
250	–	Paul in harvest; Mexican converts
251	–	Cousin Ryan on SR football team
252	–	Paul
254	–	Baby Nathan
255	–	Nathan Oscar Robinson
256	–	Ilene Robinson Richards (circa 1929)
257	–	Family visit at Steve and Bonnie's
258	–	Three generations of Larsen boys
260	–	Paul
261	–	SaraKay at Halloween party
262	–	SaraKay and Rachel
264	–	President Gordon B. Hinckley
265	–	Arlo Luke, Dad's coworker in scouts
267	–	Mark Twain
269	–	Benson/Johnson/Larsen family gathering for Nathan's blessing
270	–	Steve and Bonnie and Babies
271	–	Gary and Becky
272	–	SaraKay and Whitney Davis and heir kindergartener teacher, Melissa Hunt at the Christmas program
273	–	William J. Bennett
274	–	Mom and SaraKay
275	–	The hot shot, Tim!
276	–	Paul and Valerie Firth
277	–	David